



# THE TURBAN AND THE SWORD OF THE SIKHS

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*Essence of Sikhism*

TRILOCHAN SINGH

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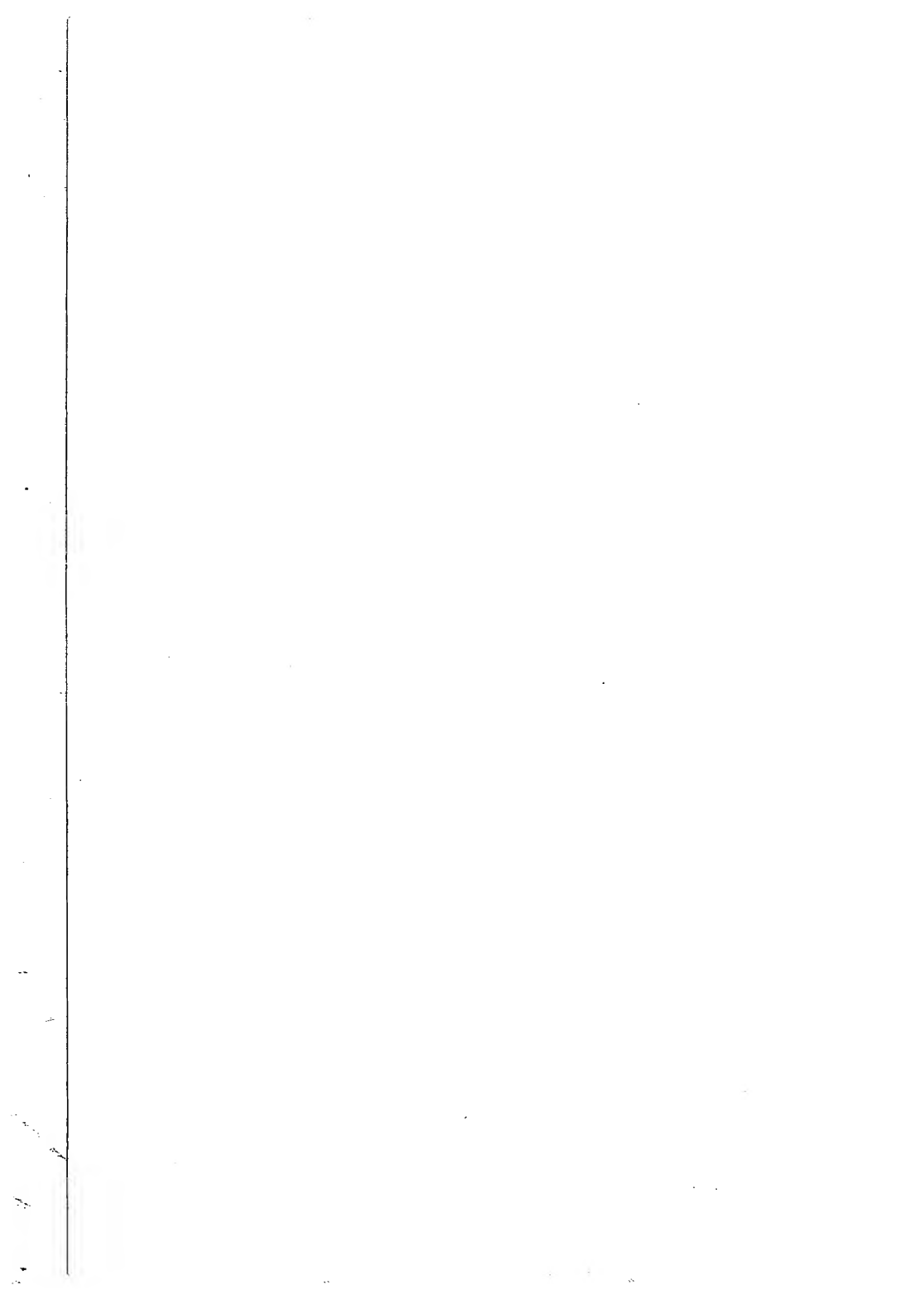
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THE TURBAN AND  
THE SWORD OF  
THE SIKHS

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ESSENCE OF SIKHISM





# THE TURBAN AND THE SWORD OF THE SIKHS

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ESSENCE OF SIKHISM

*History and Exposition of Sikh Baptism, Sikh Symbols  
And Moral Code of the Sikhs: Rehitnāmās*

DR TRILOCHAN SINGH

B. CHATTAR SINGH JIWAN SINGH

BAZAR MAI SEWAN, AMRITSAR.

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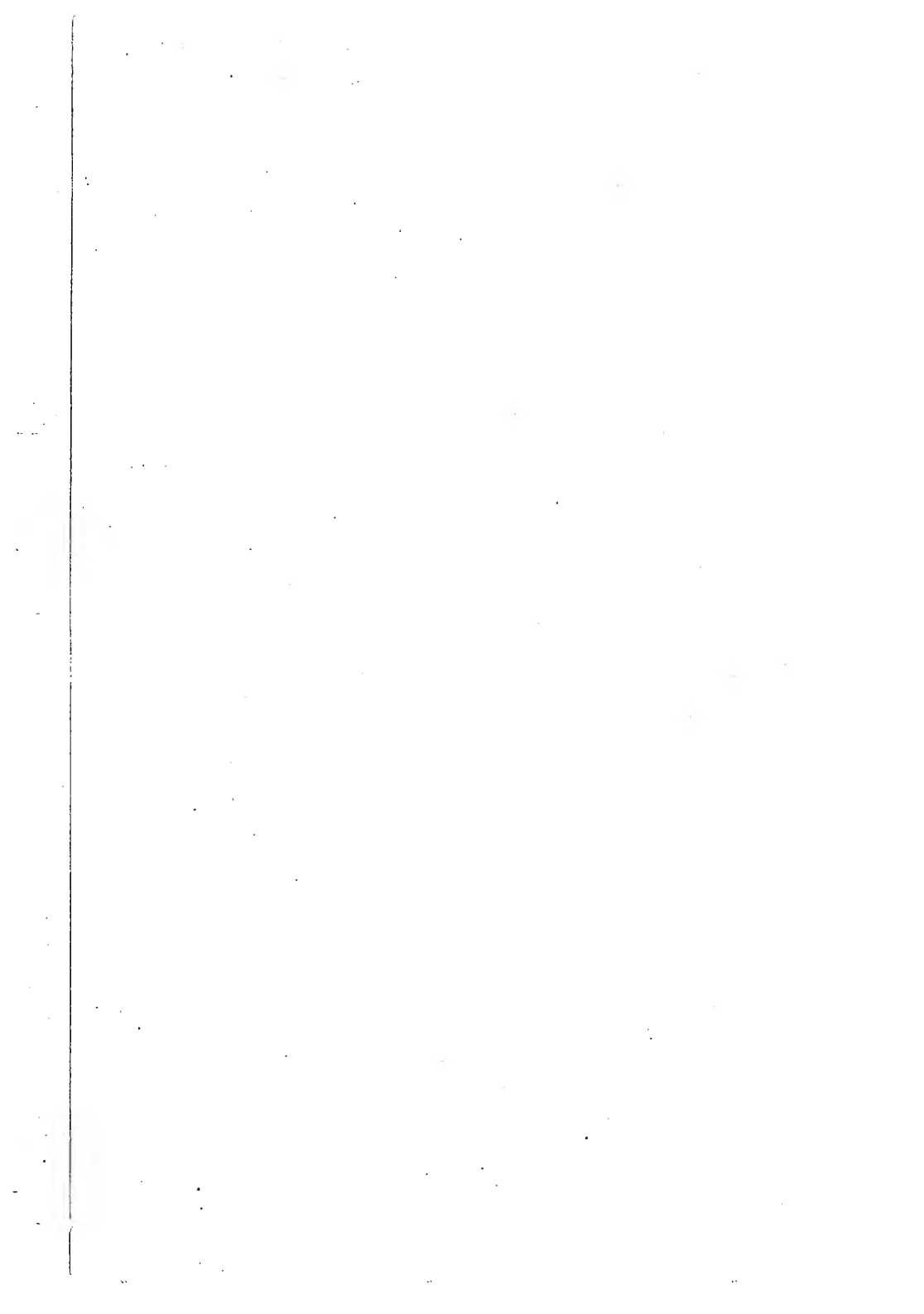
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*To*  
*My Friend*  
*Dr Anil Chañdra Banerjee*  
*Outstanding Exponent of Sikh History*  
*And the Indian Constitution*



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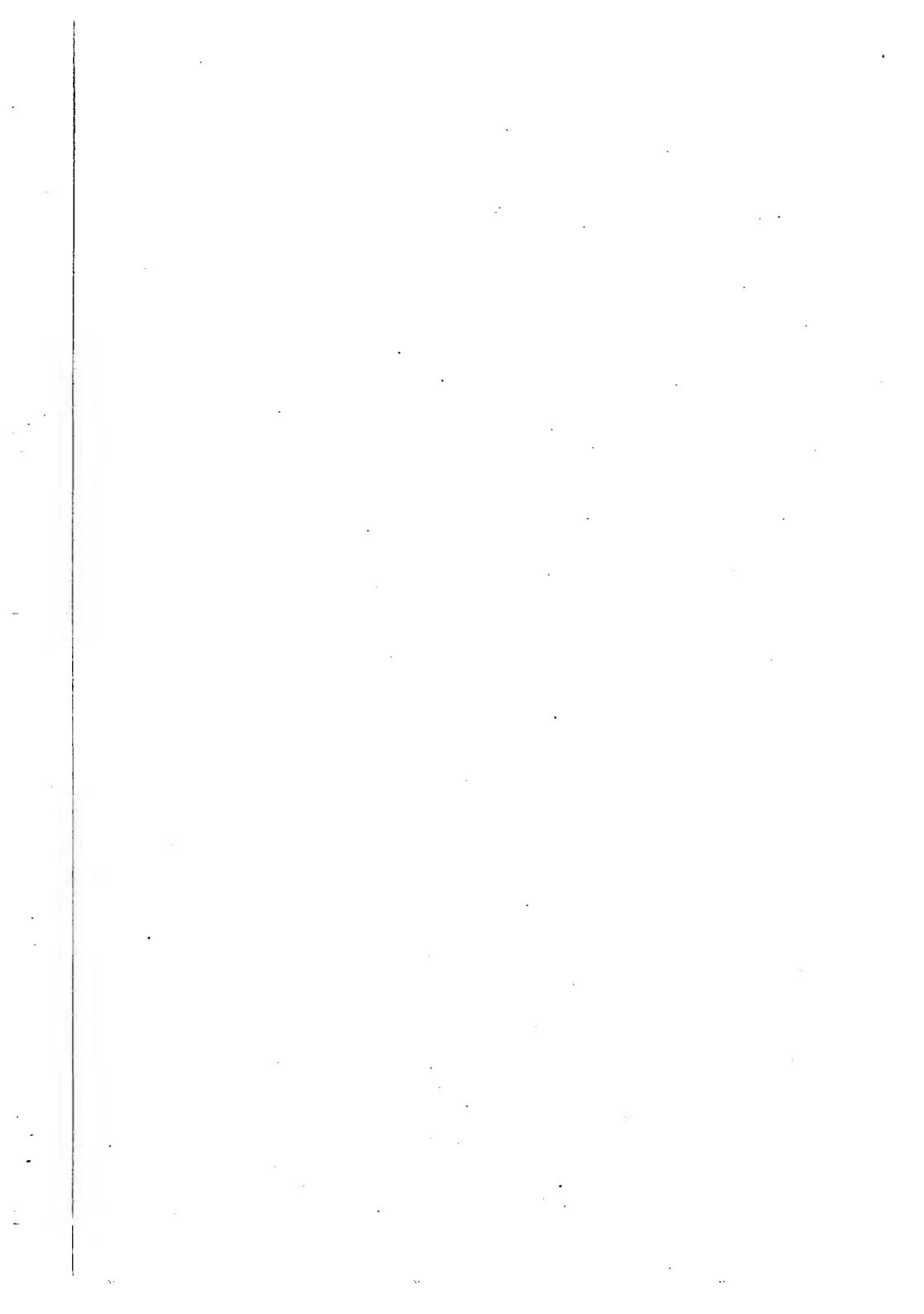
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## FOREWORD

It may seem impertinent to me, an English Christian, to suggest the direction which Sikh studies might take towards the end of the century. However, much has happened since Sikhs came to live in the United Kingdom in appreciable numbers in the nineteen fifties; they are to be found in most of our large cities; one now sits on Her Majesty's bench of Judges, and before long, one of them, I am sure, will enter Parliament. There can be few Britons now who cannot recognize a Sikh, and many children are learning about the Sikh religion in our schools. At a more advanced level conferences, papers, articles and books prompted by anniversaries of Gurū Gobiṇḍ Singh in 1966 and Gurū Nānak in 1969 have provided a considerable material for study. If this impetus is to be maintained, those tasks need to be accomplished. First, Sikh scholars must explain their beliefs and practices, and convey their theology to the western world. Secondly, they must provide reliable translations of the *Ādi Gurū Granth* in English and must supply sound commentaries. Thirdly, there is a need for sound English translations of other source materials such as *Janam Sākhīs*. If this programme is followed, English reading students will be equipped with the necessary information for arriving at their own conclusions.

Of course scholars should learn Puṁjābī in order to study the *Gurmukhī* texts, but first they must be awakened to the importance of Sikhism as a religion, deserving of their attention. When they can appreciate this through the medium of English, they will only then take this next step, and a *Gurmukhī* on the lines of Wenham's *Elements of New Testament Greek* will be required. For many young Sikhs born in Britain it is already necessary, for even if they can read modern Puṁjābī (for many it is only a spoken Puṁjābī) they cannot understand their own scriptures.

Dr Trilochan Singh has gone a long way to meet the first need, which I listed, in his discussion of the symbols of the faith; the rite of *Amrit Pāhul* initiation and theory of the sword. What is more, he has placed them in a genuine world context. It is instructive to be shown parallels exist between Sikh faith and other religions, and to have one's attention drawn to the distinctive beliefs.

I am grateful to Dr Trilochan Singh for this, his latest contribution to Sikh Studies, and feel honoured that he should ask me to write a Foreword to it. I wish him strength of body and mind together with resolution of Spirit so that his valuable work may long continue.

W. OWEN COLE

*West Sussex Institute of Higher Education,  
Chichester, England.*  
October 4, 1976.

## INTRODUCTION

It is a historical fact that when Gurū Nānak appeared on the religious firmament of India, the religions prevailing in the country, whether Hinduism or Islām, were so immersed in corrupt practices that they could hardly claim to contain the original splendour. The so called religious leaders in their self-interest were trading in the name of religion and misleading the people. All Muslim invaders who came to India to propagate Islām returned to their homes after plundering the wealth, or controlling some territories of north-west India. If judged according to the standards of their own religion, Islām, these invaders could not be labelled as true Muslims.

The condition of the Hindus at the hands of the ritual-ridden Brāhmin clergy was abominable. The Brāhmins had arrogated all powers and sanctity to themselves, and had divided society into castes, not allowing one caste to mix with the other, and the regulations governing their everyday life were made so rigid that a member of one caste had absolutely no chance of deliverance from the chains in which the Brāhmins had fettered him.

Gurū Nānak saw in the fifteenth century all the restraints put on human society in India and raised his voice of protest. His first utterance was: "There is no Hindu and no Musalmān," by which he meant that the religion which was being preached either as Hinduism or Islām was far away from its original form, and both stood tarnished before him. He promulgated a faith bereft of all rituals, inculcating man to worship One God and cultivate love for all human beings; irrespective of caste, creed or colour, and to overcome his ego. Eight successors of Nānak gave a practical demonstration of what religion could be, and the tenth Master, Gurū Gobind Singh, brought this religion to

its fullest perfection.

Transforming the Sikhs as saint-soldiers, he infused a new life in them, and the disciples (Sikhs) were changed to lions (Singhs). To save the Sikhs from any possible deviation from the right and straight path, he enunciated a code of ethics which would help them to maintain the dignity of a true Sikh. They were given some symbols which were common for all and which brought all of them to the level of equality. It is needless to reiterate the drama which the great Gurū enacted on *Baisākhī* day of 1699 A.D. at Anandpur Sāhib by which the Sikhs underwent a change—physical, social, moral, intellectual and spiritual. The five Sikhs who offered their heads to the Master were administered *Amrit* (Nectar of Immortality), and were subjected to a strict code of ethics, deviating from which was not permissible. They were required to wear some symbols which would elevate them to understand the true dignity of man.

Although Gurū Gobind Singh lived only for a brief period of nine years after the transformation of Sikhism, he saw to it within that time that the code of ethics, enunciated by him, were properly adhered to by his followers. Some people around him jotted down his instructions and named them *Rehitnāmās* : Code of Social and Religious Behaviour. It has been said by the great Gurū that "It is Sikh-like living and character which is dear to me and not merely being a Sikh in name and form: *Rehit piārī mo ko Sikh piārā nāhī.*"

With the passage of time some innovations were interpolated into the standard instructions of the Code of Conduct (*Rehitnāmās*), and at times some interested people made bold and shocking changes in these instructions altogether. The process of alteration, according to the learned author of the present work, is still being carried on by some scholars and intellectuals these days. He cites the example of people who tried to justify the wearing of helmets by the Sikhs in the army during World War II or while riding a motor-bike, although to

be without a turban is absolutely tabooed for a Sikh. Similarly, during the last three centuries many Rehitnāmās have been fabricated, enunciating instructions absolutely contrary to the proposed standard of Sikh behaviour and ethics. They are the enemies of the *Pan̄th* who associated things, not sanctioned by the Gurū's Code, to serve their own ends. Some of them have had the temerity even to substitute their own writings for the sacred *Ādi Gurū Gran̄th Sāhib*, and started their own factions where they glorified themselves, although in Sikhism no person, however great he may be, can be equated with God. Even Gurū Gobind Singh pre-warned that "those who would call me God would be cast into hell," but these founders of unauthorized factions and sects, associated with Sikhism, have the audacity to get themselves worshipped as gods by their followers.

Dr Trilochan Singh, the greatest exponent of authentic Sikh history and philosophy, has by writing this book, rendered a single service to the Sikhs by providing them with authentic Code of Ethics which would help the Sikhs in their individual, social, political and intellectual behaviour in life. He has thoroughly sifted all the available Rehitnāmās (old manuscripts and printed versions), and has given only the authentic and standard ones. The moral laws of the Rehitnāmās were meant for all classes of people and are to be adhered to rigidly, and deviation, if any, do not stigmatize repentance by the sinner, which is a clear manifestation of the great Gurū's magnanimity. It is the sin which is required to be eradicated and not the sinner. The sinner has every chance of redemption.

This book is bound to be acceptable as a Guide to an authentic Social Code for the Sikhs of all times. The politicians today try to mould the Code according to their convenience, but this book of Dr Trilochan Singh is bound to thwart all such nasty designs. This book is also going to elevate the moral status of the Sikhs, otherwise people of places where Sikhs have gone to earn their livelihood, only recognize them as labourers, taxi-

drivers, fitters and petty businessmen, and their religion is presented by them through their local religious institutions as only their religion, without having to do anything with other people. The book shall fling open the portals of Sikhism for all men who want to become men of God and lovers and servants of humanity.

Three cardinal fundamentals are a must for every Sikh which as propounded by Gurū Nānak are: (i) repeating constantly God's Name, (ii) working for living with full vigour, (iii) sharing one's earnings with others. If they are observed punctiliously, then a Sikh is a leader amongst men; their helper, their defender, saviour and guide. If he sticks to the Code of Rehitnāmās, a brilliant future awaits him and he is sure to be recognized as a leader of men.

I have particularly gone through the Rehitnāmā for *Sahajdhārīs*, and found to my great satisfaction that it is all full of love and affection for Sahajdhārīs, and there is hardly any ill-intention or contempt for them. With the expression of this love and patronage for Sahajdhārīs, they are able to become full-fledged Sikhs, ready to take Amrit and be initiated.

While introducing the *Khālsā* symbols and administering the Amrit, Gurū Gobīnd Singh had in mind to make his Sikhs sturdy warriors who would fight the evils on all fronts. These symbols have their lasting significance, and when a Sikh wears them, he is assured of the Gurū's grace. They inspire confidence in him and strengthen his consciousness with the conviction that as he has dedicated himself in his service of God, it shall now be God's responsibility to look after him and after the cause which he has ventured to undertake. These symbols constantly caution him to lead a pure life individually, and work for the betterment of the society to enable him to work for a pure corporate life and to inspire the sense of equality among all.

Dr Trilochan Singh has given a scientific and feasible explanation and significance of Sikh Symbols, and has wisely removed many misunderstandings current about them. The Rehitnāmās,

he has dealt with, are the product of post transformation of Sikhs in 1699 A.D., and they provide all details about the life and discipline which are to be followed by the Sikhs, enabling them to be better believers in the One and only One God and service of humanity as their ideals, and to lead a pure and exemplary life.

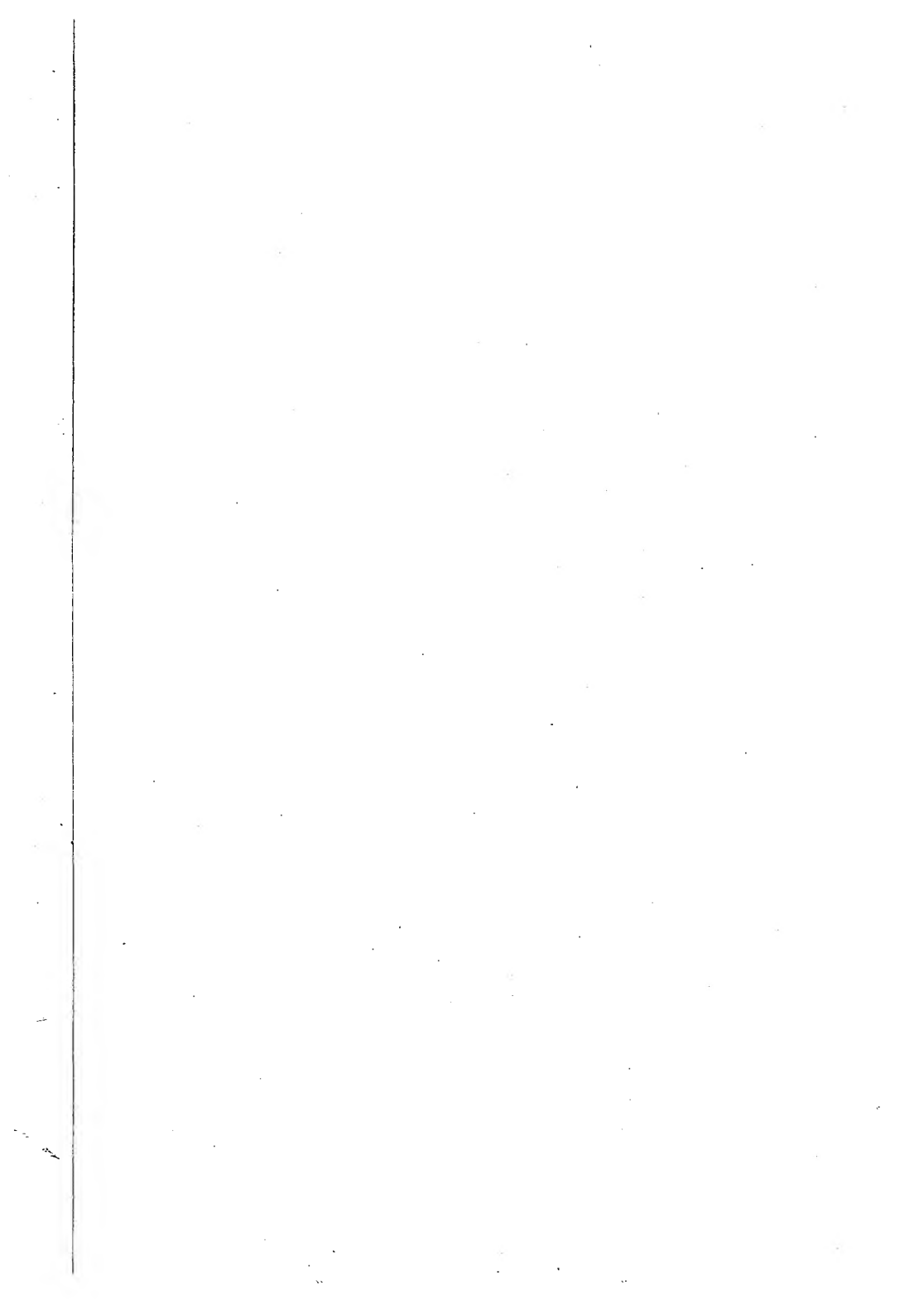
To create a society which should follow the ideal pattern, enunciated by Gurū Gobiṇḍ Siṅgh, a strict Code is but necessary, as without it people are liable to be led astray as they have been in spite of it, owing to the erratic political activities of some self-seeking persons who also pretend to follow some code, which may be spurious, fabricated or concocted. To avoid all this, Dr Trilochan Siṅgh's present attempt will be definite guideline for the Sikhs of the future.

Dr Trilochan Siṅgh is the most earnest living research scholar on Sikhism, as is evident from his previous writings on Gurū Nānak, Gurū Hari Krishan, Gurū Tegh Bahādur, Gurū Gobiṇḍ Siṅgh and other important Sikh themes. In the preparation of this book also he has put in a lot of hardwork, so as to give authentic versions of Rehitnāmās, and his labour is sure to be appreciated by all who are interested either in the propagation of Sikhism or in the welfare of the Sikhs. I heartily congratulate him on this noble venture.

DR HIRĀ LĀLL CHOPRĀ

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January 26, 1988.





## EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Sikh religion emanated from the revelation of Truth to Gurū Nānak, and was organized by him and his nine successors in the light of their fresh and unique experiences and realistic knowledge of social, ethical, spiritual and political problems of humanity. It is popularly known as Sikhism: Discipleship of the Divine Enlightener, but Gurū Nānak calls it by the name *Gurmat*: Gurū's Wisdom<sup>1</sup>; a word used over two hundred times in the writings of the Master and explained by Bhāi Gurdās in his *Vārs* and *Kabitts*. It is also called *Gurmukh Mārag*: Religion of the Enlightened, *Nirmal Panth*: Community of the Pure, *Sach kā Mārag*: Path of Truth.<sup>2</sup>

It is the personality of Gurū Nānak that provided the impetus for the development of fresh religious experiences and ideas on the basis of which a well-organized religion was founded. Unlike Hinduism, a traditional religion, Sikhism was given by its Founders, Gurū Nānak and his nine successors, a distinct organized Church called *Sanġat* or *Gurdwārā*,<sup>3</sup> canonized scriptures, *Ādi Gurū Granth*, *Dasam Granth*, *Vārs* and *Kabitts* of Bhāi Gurdās and writings

1. *Ādi Gurū Granth*, *Rāga Gūjarī*, p.505; *Rāga Rāmkalī*, p.904; *Rāga Mārū*, pp.1008-9; *Rāga Basant*, p.1190; *Rāga Sārang*, p.1233.
2. Gurū Nānak minted a new coin of his Faith  
By founding the religion of the Pure in this World.

Bhāi Gurdās, *Vār*.1, *Paurī*.45.

See also Bhāi Gurdās's, *Vār*. 3:1, 5; 14, 16; *Vār*. 5:13, 15, 20; *Vār*. 6:1, 19; *Vār*. 12:17; *Vār*, 18:20; *Vār*, 22:14, 16.

3. All historical shrines of Gurū Nānak and Gurū Tegh Bahādur in eastern India are known as *Sanġat*: Congregation. In *Ādi Gurū Granth* it occurs in this sense at innumerable places: *Rāga Mārū*, p.1025; *Rāga Dhanāsari*, p.688. The word *Gurdwārā* also occurs at many places: *Rāga Āsā*, p.351; *Rāga Sūhī*, p.730; *Rāga Rāmkalī*, pp.930, 933; *Rāga Mārū*, p.1015.

of Bhāi Naṇd Lāl, which are revered as Word of Truth: *Sachī Bāṇī* in contrast to the utterances of false prophets: *Kachī Bāṇī*<sup>4</sup>, and new birth, marriage, death and baptism ceremonies. Without having any priestly class the Sikh Gurūs introduced new methods of prayer and worship, their own method of baptism *Charan Pāhul* and later on *Khaṇḍe dī Pāhul* to initiate disciples, their own religious laws and Code of Conduct (*Rehit*), preserved till this day by tradition and practice. They made their religion free from burdensome legalism, wasteful rituals and meaningless ceremonies in order to keep its essential ideals and practices close to the pure religion of Man. Gurū Nānak advocates:

*sachī tā parī jāniat jā ridai sachā hoi.*  
*kūr kī malū utrai tanū kare hachhā dhoi.*  
 Truth can be known and comprehended  
 If the True Lord resides in One's heart.  
 The mire of falsehood is removed;  
 The body and soul becomes chaste and pure  
 By bathing in the divine waters of the spirit.  
 Truth can be known and comprehended  
 When one sincerely lives Truth.  
 Hearing inwardly the Name of God  
 The mind becomes spiritually exalted  
 And attain the Door of liberation.

*Āsā dī Vār*, 10:2,  
*Ādi Gurū Granth, Rāga Āsā*, p. 468.

A new lamp was, thus, lighted in the world of ignorance, and that lamp redeemed the whole Dark Age (*Kaliyuga*) with the Religion of Truth, the *Dharma* of God's living presence (*Nām*): *Balio charāgū andhār meh sabh kalī udharī ik nām dharam*.<sup>5</sup> The author has rightly pointed out in the present volume that the Sikh

4. *Ādi Gurū Granth, Rāga Gaurī*, p.158; *Rāga Rāmkalī*, pp.919-20; *Rāga Mārū*, p.1009, *Rāga Parbhātī*, p.1342.

5. *Ādi Gurū Granth*, p.1387.

Gurūs established the New Faith “not for confrontation with any religion, but to bring all religions in the spirit of moral and spiritual cooperation in the love of God” (p.81). Sikhism was born in the age of crisis, and Gurū Nānak’s life on earth was an unbroken chain of challenging deeds. It was a life of profound revelation of Truth and dynamic action. Gurū Nānak used the double-edged sword of Wisdom<sup>6</sup> and Truth<sup>7</sup> to attack the contemporary social injustice, political tyranny, religious fanaticism of the *Mullās* and *Punḍits*, calling each other *kāfirs* and *malechhas*, empty rituals and idolatry. He fearlessly denounced the despotism of the rulers. He condemned religious practices and institutions, dressed in the silken robes of falsehood. He condemned hypocrisy, adorned in the magnificent cloak of holiness. He condemned the vanity and tyranny of the Brāhmins that had kept three-fourths of the Hindu world as bond slaves of their vanity, authority and superiority, sanctified by superstition, empty rituals and dangerous social laws. He built up a church at Kartārpur and introduced congregational eating, meeting and worship in which all barriers of caste, colour, creed and nationality were permanently removed. He made princes sit with low caste paupers in the Community Kitchen (*Laṅgar*), and made them live and worship the same God as equal human beings. He made the Hindus and the Muslims sit together in his prayer-house and worship God with love and devotion. Gurū Nānak’s Church became *Khānaqāhs* for the Muslims and *Dharamsālas* for the Hindus. In living and worshipping Truth he gave a call to all human beings to meet and be united in the love and reverence of One God of all humanity. Gurū Nānak created a new faith, a new church, a new scripture, a new community of believers: *Sikh Saṅgat*, and his attitude and relations with the two great religious

6. Gurū Gobind Singh in his writings has called the Sword *Giān kī Bāḍhanī*: Sword of Wisdom.
7. Gurū Gobind Singh in his writings has used the attributive name of Sword for Truth (God).

traditions: Judaic, Christian and Islāmic tradition, and Hindu, Jain and *Bhaktī* tradition, have been the same. He calls the former the followers of the four *Katebs*: Semitic Books<sup>8</sup>, and the later the followers of the Vedic tradition.<sup>9</sup> With both he has one thing in common, viz God or Truth. The Sikh Gurūs established a religion which like all higher religions of the world had its own social, cultural and religious institutions, but in the scriptures and their spiritual teachings they gave a path of human brotherhood, which even today inspires mankind all over the world with truth, truthful living, peace, equality and justice. Gurū Gobind Singh exhorted the people of India to rise above the narrow orthodoxies of Hinduism and Islām, and strive true spirit of the love of God and humanity. He writes:

*dehurā masit soī pūjā au nivāj oī.*

*mānas sabai ek pai anek ko bharmāo hai.*

The Hindus and the Muslims are all one,

Have each the habits of different environments.

All men have the same eyes, the same body;

The same form, compounded by the same four elements:

Earth, air, fire and matter.

The *Abekh*: Formless of the Hindus

And the *Allāh* of the Muslims are the same.

The *Kor'ān* and the *Purāṇas* praise the same Lord.

They are all one in spirit.

The One Lord made them all.

*Dasam Granth,*

Gurū Gobind Singh, *Akāl Ustatī*, 86, p. 19.

*Hindū Turk koū, rāṣṭī Imām sāfi*

*mānas kī jāt sabhai ekai pahchānbo.*

Some call themselves Hindus,

Other call themselves Muslims;

8. The Four Book of Middle-Eastern Religions are: *Taurāt* and *Zabūr* of Judaism; *Injīl* of Christianity and *Kor'ān* of Islām.

9. Four *Vedas* are: *Rg Veda*, *Sāma Veda*, *Yajur Veda* and *Atharva Veda*.

Some consider themselves *Śiās*;  
 Some consider themselves *Sunnīs*  
 Of the Imām Sāfi School.  
 Recognize mankind to be one human race.  
 There is but One God of all,  
 Who is the Creator and Compassionate of Hindus.  
 He is the Sustainer and Merciful of Muslims.  
 All humanity worships One and the same God.  
 The Eternal Lord is the Enlightener of all.  
 Know Him to be One Beauteous Spirit.  
 Know Him to be One Splendrous Light.

*Dasam Granth,*  
 Gurū Gobind Singh, *Akāl Ustāṭī*, 85, p.19.

This call for realization of Oneness of spirit in all religions and in all races and cultures formed the rock foundation of Sikhism. Arnold Toynbee rightly points out: "The Sikh religion might be described, not inaccurately, as a vision of this Hindu-Muslim common ground. To have discovered and embraced the deep harmony, underlying the historic Hindu-Muslim discord, has been a noble spiritual triumph, and Sikhs may well be proud of their religion's ethos and origin."<sup>10</sup> On this count Mr. K.R. Narāyaṇan, President of India, rightly described Sikhism "as the religion of the future" and the *Khālsā* Holy Order, created 300 years ago by Gurū Gobind Singh, "As the basis for creation of a new order for society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century". The greatness of Sikhism lays in the fact, adds Mr. Narāyaṇan, that "while all religions lay emphasis on truth, the Sikh Gurūs lay emphasis on truthful conduct. This meant that truthful conduct was above truth itself".<sup>11</sup>

Gurū Nānak felt that the Light of God, revealed by him to the world, could remain burning in full effulgence if there is someone competent to carry the torch of wisdom and philosophy to the next

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10. Trilochan Singh et al, *Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*, Foreword, p.10.

11. *The Tribune*, Chandigarh, December 16, 1995.

generation and pass it on to successive generations in all its perfection and transmuting splendour. Sikhism, with all its basic and independent institutions had been founded, its seeds sown all over the world and its roots deeply fixed in the spirit of One God and Eternal Truth. The transfiguration of Lehṇā into Gurū Aṅgad was an event of great historical importance in this direction. It showed how on the path of Sikhism a dedicated novice becomes an inspired disciple (Sikh), and the disciple changes mentally and spiritually into an embodiment of his Master's spirit. His nine successors, Gurū Aṅgad to Gurū Gobind Singh repeated this experiment of selecting the successor in a novel way by putting them to severe tests till Gurū Gobind Singh merged his personality in the Khālsā and declared:

*Khālsā mero rūp hai khā.*

*Khālsā mehī haun karau nivās.*

The Khālsā is my exceptional Image.

In the Khālsā ever resides my spirit.

The Khālsā is my beloved and venerable Master.

The Khālsā is my divine Protector.

The Khālsā is my father and mother.

The Khālsā is my body and soul.

The Khālsā is embodiment of true and perfect Gurū.

The Khālsā is my gallant and knightly friend.

I have stated the truth without an iota of misconstruction.

God and Gurū Nānak are to this my witnesses.

Gurū Gobind Singh, *Sarb Loh Granth*, 519-526.

The ten Gurūs during their pontificate of 230 years (1469-1708 A.D.) carried the Torch of Truth as messengers of God, and Gurū Gobind Singh handed over this Torch of Truth to establish *dharma*: (righteousness) to the Khālsā: The Army of God: *Khālsā Akāl Purakh kī Fauj*. The word Khālsā is derived from Arabic *Khālīs*: pure, unsullied, Perso-Arabic *Khālīsah*: lands directly under government management without the mediation of *Jagirdārs* or *Mansabdārs*. Though, Khālsā was formally created by Gurū Gobind

Siñgh on March 29, 1699, the term was already in use. Bhagat Kabīr has used the word Khālse (pl. of Khālsā)<sup>12</sup> in one of his hymn: “*kahu kabīr jan bhae khālse prem bhagatī jih jānī*: Says Kabīr, Only those devotees are owned by God who are imbibed in God's love and devotion”.<sup>13</sup> Gurū Hargobīnd (1595-1644 A.D.) used it for the Sikhs whose loyalty was to the Gurū rather than to the corrupt *Masānds*. Gurū Hargobīnd used the term in his *Hukamnāmā* {Encyclic Letter} to the *Saṅgat* of eastern region: “*pūrab dī saṅgatī Gurū dā Khālsā hoi*: The congregation of the eastern region belongs to the Gurū.”<sup>14</sup> Gurū Tegh Bahādur also used this term in one of his *Hukamnāmā*: “*Paṭṭan dī saṅgatī Gurū jio dā Khālsā hai*: The congregation of Paṭṭan is the Gurū's own Khālsā.”<sup>15</sup> Gurū Gobīnd Siñgh also used this term before creation of the Khālsā Holy Order in his *Hukamnāmā* dated Samvat Chet 14, 1755 Bk/March 12, 1699 A.D. : “*Sarbat saṅgatī Māchhīwārē kī Gurū rakhaigā merā Khālsā hai*: The whole congregation of Māchhīwārā shall be protected by the Gurū as they are my own Khālsā.”<sup>16</sup> The term “Khālsā,” however acquired a special connotation after Gurū Gobīnd Siñgh administered *Khaṇḍe dī Pāhul* to the *Pañj Piāras* on March 29, 1699, when Gurū Gobīnd Siñgh replaced the *Charn Pāhul* baptism with baptism of the Double-Edged Sword, and the Sikhs, so initiated, were collectively called the Khālsā. The Khālsā was to be a casteless body of *Siñghs* (Lions) and *Kaurs* (Princesses), outwardly distinguishable by their Articles of Faith: *Pañj Kakārs*. Sheikh Ahmed Deedāt, a South

12. Giāni Bishan Siñgh in his *Bhagat Bānī Saṭik* has given a misleading footnote, suggesting that Gurū Gobīnd Siñgh changed the original word from *Khālāse* to *Khālse* when he got prepared the recension of *Ādi Gurū Granth* at Damdamā through Bhāi Manī Siñgh. In all the old recensions of *Ādi Gurū Granth*, including *Kartārpur Bīr* (1604 A.D.) the word is *Khālse* and not *Khālāse* as asserted by the learned author.

13. *Ādi Gurū Granth, Rāga Sorath*, p.654.

14. Shamsheer Siñgh Ashok, *Nisaṇ te Hukamnāme*, p.15.

15. *Ibid.*, p.32.

16. *Ibid.*, p.64.



African teacher, rightly opines: "The turbaned Sikh looks like a lion, the rest of us look like sheep, afraid to be identified."<sup>17</sup> The phrase *Vāhigurū jī kā Khālsā* became part of the Sikh salutation, "*Vāhigurū jī kā Khālsā. Vāhigurū jī kī Fateh: Khālsā is of One Eternal Lord. Victory is of the Eternal Lord.*" Gurū Gobind Singh declared that all, who in future, accepted this God-given form of initiation would be known as *Khālsā*: "Wherever there are five Sikhs assembled who abide by the Gurū's teachings (*Gurmat*), know that I am in the midst of them. Henceforth, the Gurū is the *Khālsā* and the *Khālsā* is the Gurū." Bhāi Gurdās (1551-1637 A.D.), a contemporary from Gurū Amar Dās to Gurū Hargobind has explained this philosophy in his writings: "*ikū Sikh, doi sādḥ saṅgū, pañjī parmesariū: An individual Sikh is a devoted Seeker, two make a congregation: Saṅgat, while in five Sikhs there is manifest the Light of God.*"<sup>18</sup>

Thus when *Nirmal Pañth* of Gurū Nānak was transformed into *Khālsā Pañth* by Gurū Gobind Singh in 1699 A.D. he established the same on the perennial philosophy of Gurū Nānak, which advocates: "*pañch parvāṇ pañch pardhānū: The Enlightened Ones are accepted by God and the Enlightened Ones are exalted and supreme.*"<sup>19</sup> During 300 years of their existence the *Khālsā Army*, following the commandments of their Gurūs, performed the dual responsibility of protecting the honour of the Indian women by rescuing them from the clutches of the foreign invaders and permanently sealing the borders of India against the repeated aggressions of the Afghan invaders. *Akāl Purakh* (God) is Timeless, and the *Khālsā Army of God: Khālsā Akāl Purakh kī fauj*, too is timeless and it has a definite and important role to play in each century i.e. to establish Dharma (Righteousness). At the same time the history of the Sikhs blazes with their passion for religious, cultural and political freedom. The story of every century is a saga

17. *The Toronto Sun*, July 11, 1994.

18. Bhāi Gurdās, *Vār. 13, Paurī. 19.*

19. Gurū Nānak, *Japuṛī, Paurī. 16.*

of persecution, resistance, martyrdoms to protect their identity, Articles of Faith: *Kakārs* and their homeland Puñjāb. Respecting the religious sentiments of the Sikhs the British government recruited only the baptized Sikhs in the Sikh Regiment. Major Donovan Jackson informs us: "The greatest care has always been taken by the Regiments to see that none but those, who have accepted the *pāhul* are taken for the Sikh vacancies..... During the advance to Cownpore (Kānpur) the old unsuitable semi full-dress fighting kit was discarded and permission accorded to fight in the loose shirt and turban, while at the close of the campaign the right to wear the red *pagrī* (turban), then a special mark of esteem, was bestowed on them."<sup>20</sup> The right to wear *Kirpān* (Sword) was taken away under Indian Arms Rules 1909. But the Sikhs defied this encroachment upon their religious freedom, and after sustained battle regained their legitimate right to wear their Article of Faith: *Kirpān* (Sword) in 1914 and different Notifications to this effect were issued by the Government of India.<sup>21</sup> Nehrū Committee 1928 and Sapru Committee 1945 incorporated the right of Sikhs to wear and carry *Kirpāns* in the Constitution, framed by them for free India's Constitution, but Article 25 of the Constitution of India confers this right in an ambiguous manner.<sup>22</sup> The Allahābād High Court in a landmark judgement in *Rex vs. Dhayān Singh* has rejected the contention that a *Kirpān* is different from a sword, or that a *Kirpān* under Article 25 of the Constitution must be of a particular size or shape. The court had categorically stated that there is no difference between a *Kirpān* and a sword, and sword of 3 feet or 6 inches size is a *Kirpān* within the meaning of Article 25

20. Major Donovan Jackson, *India's Army*, pp. 302-3.

21. For details of these notifications and their texts, see Santokh Singh's *Sword of the Khālsā*, pp.57-77.

22. "Article 25 of the Constitution of India does not give any special treatment or concession to the Sikhs. Explanation I simply says that wearing and carrying of *Kirpān* by the Sikhs shall be deemed to be included in the profession of Sikh Religion."

Santokh Singh, *Sword of the Khālsā*, p.79.

of the Constitution, and a Sikh is entitled to carry one sword without a licence.<sup>23</sup> The case has been approved by the country's eminent lawyer Mr. H.M. Seervā in his famous *Commentary on the Constitution of India*.<sup>24</sup> Still the Government of India, advocating loudly secularism and discussions within the frame-work of the constitution did not allow Mr. Simranjīt Singh Mānn, a Sikh representative, to carry his Article of Faith: Kirpān in the *Lok Sabhā*: Lower House of the Indian Parliament, forgetting that this Sword of the Sikh Gurūs had protected the oppressed humanity of India for more than three centuries. Even when Shivājī was presented as a prisoner in the court of Aurangzeb, he was allowed to carry his sword. Though the Sikhs could not get justice on this count in the largest democracy of the world and country of their origin, they have succeeded in retaining the sanctity of their symbols; the turban and the sword in countries like USA, UK, Australia and Canada. In USA the right to carry Kirpān was upheld by the first Ohio District Court of Appeals in a historic judgement. Mr. Harjinder Singh was convicted in 1994 for carrying his 5 cm Kirpān. The Honourable Judge of the court questioned why the case was pursued, suggesting that the prosecution violated the constitutional right to freedom of religion. "I am amazed that a case like this would be prosecuted once, much less twice. To be a Sikh is to wear a Kirpān. It is that simple. It is a religious symbol and in no way weapon", opined Judge Mark Painter.<sup>25</sup> In Canada, Mr. Prītam Singh Johal, a 73 year old war veteran's fight for his turban would put many lazybones to shame. Reetā Sharmā, a *Tribune* correspondent in Vancouver reported this historic battle to enter the Newton Legion Branch, a wing of the Royal Canadian Legion, while a celebration of the Remembrance Day parade was on. The Legion had specially invited Indo-Canadian veterans of World War I and World War II.

23. AIR, Allāhābād High Court, 1952, p.53.

24. Second Edition, vol. i, 1975, para. 13.23.

25. *The Sunday Tribune*, Chandigarh, January 5, 1997.

Lt. Col. Pritam Singh Johal visited the Newton Legion Branch on November 8, 1993, three days before the parade, to seek details of dress to be worn on the day of the celebrations. Despite clearance of a formal jacket and turban (pagrī), he along with other four Sikhs was stopped at the gate. Mr. Johal pleaded his case with Mr. Frank Underwood, President of Newton Legion Branch, giving historical perspective of the turban of the Sikhs: "Then I took him (President) aside with a couple of other members of the branch. I made all-out efforts to make them understand that the turban (pagrī) is not a mere head-dress. For a Sikh it is a part of his religious direction. That he never removes it from his head, even when dead, and is cremated along with it. I told him that when I met the first President of India, Dr Rājendra Prasād in 1951 and the President of Vietnam, Dr Ho Chi Minh in 1961 I appeared with my turban on my head.

"Sikhs fought all wars, including World Wars I and II with turbans on their heads. They never wore helmets. That in pre-independent India, British and non-Sikh commissioned officers had to take off their hats to enter the combined officers messes, whereas Sikhs were permitted entry with turbans on their heads. Even in Buckingham Palace of England the Sikhs were allowed to appear before the King and Queen with their turban to receive Victoria Cross, the highest award for valour and utmost bravery.

"There is no occasion as per our religion when a Sikh is supposed to remove his turban. Even in Canada all the twelve Municipal Police Forces in British Columbia, Sikhs have been permitted to wear their turbans. But unfortunately all my pleas fell on deaf ears. Many members of the Newton Legion Branch tried to persuade the authorities to let the guests in. They even demanded change in the rules, but the President refused point blank."

Ms. Penny Priddy La, who was scheduled to make a speech on the occasion and Councillor Bruce Ralston walked out of the lounge in protest against the humiliating treatment meted out to the invited veteran Sikhs. This inevitably brought the national

media on the scene, and the issue became a national debate. Lt. Col. Johal was interviewed on various Televisions atleast 14 times and invited to speak in ten debate shows. While the national media, Television, Newspapers, Radios etc, gave the issue a constructive logical and appropriate angle, Lt. Col. Johal fought the battle of the turban in a befitting manner by writing letters to all MPs of Canada, all organizations dealing the religious discrimination, all Canadian authorities relevant in law-making, Queen of England and 100 branches of Royal Canadian Legion.

As a result of public pressure, the Executive Council of the Royal Canadian Legion called an emergency meeting and unanimously approved a national policy concerning the wearing of religious head-dress of Sikhs and Jews "is not to be considered to constitute head-dress in the traditional sense." Consequently Mr. Frank Underwood, President Newton Legion Branch tendered an apology on the BCTV, which reads: "On behalf of the executive committee of our branch, I apologize to all war veterans for any embarrassment and inconvenience caused by the application of long-standing branch rules on November 11, 1993."<sup>26</sup> But the veteran Sikh hero was not fighting against these rules, but the fact that for a Sikh a turban is not a mere head-dress, it is an Article of Faith, associated with vows of initiation.

Simultaneously in Canada the Sikhs were fighting their battle to retain their right to wear turbans in the RCMP forces instead of the force's traditional stetson. Mr. Baltej Singh Dhillon, a resident of British Columbia and Constable in Royal Canadian Mounted Police, initiated the movement in 1990 to protect his Article of Faith: Turban, by reporting on duty with his turban on, instead of permitted headgear, stetson. In 1991 the four Albertan, including three former RCMP Officers and a former Mountie's wife, filed a suite, claiming that the decision of the former RCPM Commissioner, Norman Inkster to allow the Sikhs to wear turbans, while in uniform, offended the force's non-religious nature and

26. *The Tribune*, Chandigarh, July 7, 1994.

was discriminatory. The group challenging turbans collected 2,10,000 signatures on a petition to the parliament to stop turbans among the Mounties. When that failed, these people filed the petition in the court, contending that the uniform of the RCMP should be neutral and not show their religion in any form. Here it is pertinent to mention that most major police forces across Canada permit the Sikhs to wear turbans, and over the years changes have been made to allow the Sikhs to wear turbans in such places as courts and the House of Commons.

Rendering her argument against the petition, Justice Barbara Reed agreed that the police must be neutral from political or religious bias, but any evidence that turban-wearing officers might be biased was "quite speculative and vague," she noted. The judge further confirmed that you don't become less of a Canadian merely because your religion requires you to wear a turban or a yarmulke."

"In a pluralistic society like Canada, it is the law to accommodate difference," said Sharish Chotalia, an Edmonton lawyer who argued the case for the Alberta Civil Liberties Association.<sup>27</sup> The Ex-Mounties filed an appeal against this decision of the lower court, upholding the right of the Sikhs to wear turbans in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police: RCMP. The Federal Court of Appeal in Calgary rejected the appeal and in a unanimous decision, the three panel judges said the policy of the RCMP to allow Sikh mounties to wear turban was "an article of faith."<sup>28</sup> The Supreme Court of Canada also rejected the appeal filed by the Ex-Mounties and upheld the decision of the lower court.<sup>29</sup>

In New South Wales, Australia, the Sikh Community unanimously fought against the "Summary Offence Act 1988" and Knife Legislations, giving powers to the government to impose heavy fines and imprisonment for carrying the Kirpān (Sword) in

27. *The Tribune*, Chandigarh, August, 1. 1994.

28. *Ibid.*, June 18, 1995.

29. *Daily Ajit*, Jalandhar, February 28, 1996.

a public place. The matter was taken up by Mr. Bāwā Singh Jagdev of Sikh Mission Centre, Mr. Gurmīt Singh and Mrs. Suriñder Kaur with Ethnic Affairs Commission, and Premier Hon'ble Bob Carr, who was kind enough to acknowledge publicly on April 20, 1998 that the Sikhs are being discriminated with these legislations and assured the Sikh Congregation: "I know that Sikhs are concerned about the discrimination..... On my part I want a policy that recognizes Sikh cultural traditions. I think we can work through the solution to the problem of Kirpān and the problem of wearing a crash helmet.... So let us work together through the Ethnic Affairs Commission to see, as we move to tighten the Knife Laws in New South Wales, that we do not discriminate against the wearing of Kirpān, and look at the opportunity for the Sikhs when it comes to the obligation to wear motor-cycle helmet...."

As a result of this favourable response from the Premier the Sikhs retained their right to wear Kirpān as an Article of their faith and the Summary Offences Act 1988 was suitably amended.<sup>30</sup>

During this struggle of the Sikhs to protect their symbols and identity Dr John Spellman, once admired for his advocacy of Sikhism, sided with a coterie of Canadians, opposing the entry of turbaned Sikhs into the elite, traditionally all-white Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and packed his opportunistic article<sup>31</sup> with perfidious lies to convince the Canadian law-makers with his inane arguments that the Sikh turban lacked any scriptural sanction and the Five K's : *Kakārs* : Articles of Faith, have no historical underpinning. He concluded his article with a misleading lie that the turban was indeed a gift of the British government to the Sikhs in colonial military service in the later half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Unfortunately for John Spellman and the reverends of his ilk, little knowledge proved dangerous, and all their half-baked

30. *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, Chandigarh, Vol.1, No.2, April-June 1999, p.154.

31. The article was published in the *Globe and Mail*, Toronto, January 22, 1994.

theories failed to convince the law-makers of Canada and undermine the historical truths.

Seeing John Spellman's game-plan defeated, another distorter of Sikh history, religion and culture, Dr W.H. McLeod,<sup>32</sup> came up with his puerile theory, on the lines of John Spellman's arguments, in a recently published book *Sikh Identity; Continuity and Change*, advocating that "turban is a Khālsā symbol and not a Sikh symbol"<sup>33</sup> with the avowed mission to deprive the Sikhs all over the world to retain their right to wear turban and separate identity, and support the politics of assimilation of the rulers. It is to be noted that *Ādi Gurū Granth* is a universal scripture with oecumenical approach; Word of God to practice the presence of God and not a specific *Rehitnāmā* (Code of Conduct) for the Sikhs. Still in *Ādi Gurū Granth* a complete man has been conceived with hair and turban on his head: *Sābat sūraṭi dastār sirā*;<sup>34</sup> a Knight (Khālsā) owned by the God in the presence of which no intruder can enter the realm of Truth:

*khūbū teri pagrī meethe tere bol.*

*Dwārīkā nagarī kāhe ke Mongol.*

Unique is your turban, sweet is your speech,

How can there be a Mongol in the city of Dwārīkā.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Nāmdev, *Rāga Tilāṅg*, p.727.

Sikhism has faced such disruptionists and distortionists in the last four centuries in the shape of Mīṇās, Dhīrmaliās, Masaṇds, Rām Rayiās during the Gurū period, Niraṇjaṇiās during the *Misal* period and Niraṅkāris, Rādhāsoāmīs, Nāmdhārī Gurūs and hired scholars in the present century. This revised edition of the book is a first and modest attempt to remove the misconceptions created

32. For details see Dr Trilochan Singh's *Ernest Trumpp and W.H. McLeod As Scholars of Sikh History, Religion and Culture*.

33. "The Turban: Symbol of Sikh Identity," *Sikh Identity: Continuity and Change*, Eds: Pashaurā Singh and N.G. Gerald Barrier, pp. 57-67.

34. *Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Arjan, *Mārū Solhe*, p.1084.



by these disruptionists and distortionists about Sikh ethics, Sikh philosophy, Sikh *Rehit* (Code of Conduct), Sikh Symbols: *Kakārs*, history and exposition of Sikh baptism, Sikh *Sampardāyas* and *Rādhāsoāmī* and *Nāmdhārī* Gurūs, claiming to be spiritual Pontiffs (Gurūs) after Gurū Gobind Singh.

In this revised and enlarged edition of the book 14 new chapters have been added, besides updating the existing chapters and adding exhaustive Glossary and Indexes. All the vernacular terms are explained either in the main text or in the Glossary. Their orthography is thus made clear in one of these two places. All vernacular words, when they first occur in the same chapter, are italicized with the exception of well-known texts and scriptures, which have been italicized at all the places. All honorifics, names of persons, castes, deities, cities and sects appear with diacritics throughout the book. All vernacular words have been pluralized after the English pattern by adding an 's' at the end of the word. For the first time I have given a Theological Index, i.e. First Line Index of the verses of scriptures quoted, for better understanding and locating the text of the scriptures. The entire copy-editing and updating of the manuscript, like preparing Bibliography, Glossary, Indexes, use of diacritics has been done by me, and any shortcoming on these counts will be mine and not of the author. I have added a new Chapter, Fundamental Beliefs of Sikhism (Chapter 19), based on a author's booklet and changed the title of Chapter 21 from Outgroups of Sikhism to Adversaries of Sikhism, keeping in view the theme of the Chapter. I shall be indebted to all those learned readers of this book, who will be kind enough to spare their valuable time to point out any short-coming that might have crept in while preparing this revised version from the editing, linguistic, historical or theological point of view.

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## AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

Admiral Gorshkov, the Naval Chief of Soviet Union, on his visit to India, immediately after the Bangla Desh (East Pakistan) War, expressed his desire to some government officials to meet some Sikh scholar who could enlighten him on his recently awakened curiosity about Sikh history and culture. A meeting was soon arranged between Admiral Gorshkov and the Author in the reception room of Gurdwārā Parbañdhak Committee, Sis Ganj, Chāñdnī Chowk, Delhī, which manages the historical Sikh Shrines of the Capital. Present at this meeting were four high ranking Russian Naval Commanders, a Russian Interpreter, Vice Admiral Batrā of the Indian Navy, Mr. Iqbāl Singh I.A.S., Administrator of Sikh Shrines and Mr. Narinderpāl Singh, Information Officer.

Admiral Gorshkov impressed me as Khrushchevian in his demeanour; frank, open-minded, anxious and sincere enquirer. He took off his shoes and sat close to me with comfortable ease of a familiar friend. There was nothing of the military stiffness, I have generally found in Generals and Admirals, either in his manners or his speech. This discussion opened with a loaded question asked by Admiral Gorshkov, behind which there was an intense curiosity to know all about the Sikhs. He asked, "In the Indo-Pak Wars we have seen (probably through satellite télé-films) that it is the Sikh Commanders and the Sikh soldiers who were in the vanguard and were instrumental in fighting for victory. Their courage is outstanding and they all do not fear death. Even during early periods they have distinguished themselves as great warriors. Do they get this heroic spirit from their religion, and if so, what are the unique features of your religion which makes your people so fearless soldiers?"

Whenever there is an Indo-Pak war, much incense is burnt by the Indian government and politicians to glorify and praise Sikh Commanders and Sikh soldiers, but as soon as the war is over, this incense becomes smoke and cloud to screen the heroic achievements of Sikh military officers and soldiers from public view and even from historical enquirers. A few hastily written books and monographs of these wars by non-Sikh journalists, who did not even care to visit the area of warfare, played down the role of the Sikh soldiers in these victories. So when Admiral Gorshkov asked me this question, I was a little surprised to find that a distinguished foreigner was still interested to know something which our government was trying to forget.

I started answering Admiral Gorshkov's question by saying that the Sikhs owe this unique spirit to their religion and particularly to their outlook about life and death, which is antithesis of what dialectic materialism teaches about them. We owe it to the conviction, inspired by the Sikh Gurūs, that we must resist evil and tyranny at all levels—social, cultural and political—and here we differ from the outlook of Tolstoy and Gāndhī, who insist that we must not resist evil. The dialogue and discussion lasted for about two and half hours. Admiral Gorshkov expressed happiness that he had now come to know about the basic things of Sikh history and character. Mr. Iqbāl Singh, Administrator, then presented some of my books to the Russian Admiral.

It was at that time I conceived the idea of writing such a book as this, into which most of the ideas that came up for the discussion have been incorporated. It is these concepts and ideals which make the Sikhs born soldiers, hardworking artisans, efficient technicians and deeply religious people. There was much in the discussions with Admiral Gorshkov, such as guerilla warfare of the Sikhs in the eighteenth century, their military strategy when fighting armies five times their number, which could not be brought into this book but has been discussed in detail in the author's forthcoming book, *The Glorious History of Sikhs, 1700 A.D. to 1800 A.D.*

When I was in Britain from December 1975 to March 1977 for lectures and research work, the Sikh agitation against compulsion to wear crash helmets, while riding a motor-bike, was at its peak, and was enthusiastically conducted even by Sikhs who did not possess motor-bikes. The cause was just but three things surprised me most. First, it appeared incredible that the British government with its 100 years of associations with the Sikh people and their history, forgot so soon that the Sikhs refused to wear helmets in the two world wars. All orders compelling Sikh soldiers to wear steel helmets during world wars were withdrawn, even though some Sikh historians known for their shifty, erratic and compromising researches in this case, concocted evidence to rationalize the requirement of the British rulers.<sup>1</sup> The Sikh armies and the Sikh divines and masses condemned these leaders and historians all over the world. I was surprised how could the same British government suggest that the Sikhs should wear helmets, while riding, motor-bikes under civilian laws?

The second thing that surprised me most was that the Editors, Correspondents and Journalists of leading British Newspapers and B.B.C. go to the extent of risking their lives and precious money to know and to write about the rites and customs of tribes of remote regions, and yet during the last many years they did nothing to investigate facts about the turban of the Sikhs or publish anything worthwhile on the subject. On the other hand some of the London Dailies known for their anti-Asian bias, allowed extremely absurd statements and letters to be published against the Sikh turban. National Front Party's scurrilous comments about the turban and the Sikh people found honourable place in these Newspapers.

The third thing which equally shocked me was that the Sikhs spent thousands of Pounds in foreign countries on processions, agitations and wasteful luxury, yet they rarely spend any money to produce authentic and appealing literature to explain the religious problems of the Sikh Community to the people of the

country in which they live. This is obviously because the leadership of the Sikh Institutions (Sikh Temples and other Societies) is in the hands of people who have captured the management of places of worship only to enhance their social and political prestige. The author is of the firm opinion that if the Sikhs as a minority are made victims of some persecution in the country in which they live, they should first adopt non-agitational approach by publishing pamphlets and books, expressing the correct feelings and sentiments of the Sikhs in good readable English and other European languages in a well-printed form and thus enlighten the politicians and the intelligentsia of the country. When all such means fail, they are justified in launching a peaceful agitation according to the political norms and traditions of the country in which they live. To the news-media which wilfully misinterprets or avoids reporting truth about the vital problems of the racial, religious and linguistic minorities, one can say that if they continue to do so, they will lose their credibility at home and abroad. There is no dearth of such papers even in India which always distort and misinterpret minorities and their problems.

The Sikh symbols like turban, the sword, the hair and the beard, the iron bangle, which attract everyone's attention are inseparably connected with the vows of Sikh baptism and initiation. These non-Sikhs, who have been writing utterly absurd things about the Sikh turban and their refusal to wear helmets, have never cared to understand what the vows of initiation into a religion means and how sacred are the symbols connected with these vows. How many Christians settled in non-Christian countries can tolerate insult and injury to the *Cross* or to their vows of Christian Faith.

The main responsibility for seeing that the religious dresses and symbols of minority religions are respected in the western countries rests with the Heads of Christian Churches, notably the Archbishops and Bishops of Catholic and Protestant Churches. If they remain silent on such issues out of concealed religious

and cultural bias, it would give the impression that they are confining Christian tolerance and love thy neighbour sympathy to the four walls of their respective churches. This attitude in the western countries is the one cause of intolerance which some Asians and African countries have started expressing towards Christian missionaries where they are in a minority. Buddhists, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs are seriously disturbed when Christian Heads and Churches fail to check or adequately condemn the injustice they suffer on grounds of faith, race, colour in western Christian States. Those Christians who still cannot tolerate heathens, those Whites who cannot tolerate Blacks in the so-called civilized and advanced countries of the west, and those Muslim nations who do not hesitate to eliminate non-Muslims in their Islāmic States, have no honourable place in the civilized future of world history. Any state, secular or religious, which is built on the theory of one ideology, one language, one religion, one political system may survive for some years through oppressive dictatorships, but it will ultimately collapse like an impressive pyramid of sand built on apex.

Sikhism is a young religion; a little over five hundred years old and the Sikhs number about 20 millions, and yet it appears that the world is too small for them. In 1934, when I visited my home village Mansūrpur in the Jalandhar district for the second time in my boyhood, I found that a number of families had migrated to Spain, Panama, Fiji, Australia, East Africa, Middle-East, Canada, Britain, Malaya. Since then I came to realize that every Sikh has two geographical hearts. The vital part of their mental make up is their inner heart, which the Indian psychologists call their Homeland, the Puñjāb. This Homeland has been shrinking and expanding every fifty years for the last three hundred years. In 1947 it was divided into two Puñjābs: one exclusively Muslim for the Muslims of Pakistan and the other for Hindus and Sikhs of India. The Indian Puñjāb was again divided into the predominantly Hindu Haryāṇā and the predominantly Sikh

Puñjāb. It is not difficult to foresee that these political barriers, created artificially between the Puñjābīs, will fall in the next two or three decades.

Such is the sweet fragrance of the soil of Puñjāb that all Sikhs who fail to become British with British passports and all American Sikhs of Indian origin who have a cultural and religious attachment to Puñjāb will continue to show reverence for this land of five rivers and the Golden Temple (Harimāndīr). Their inner hearts will always long to anoint their heads with the dust of this land, made sacred by the footprints of the great Gurūs, the divine *Rishūs* (*Rṣis*) and the *Ṣūfī Dervishes*. The other heart of the Sikhs living abroad is always abandoned to the romance of getting the maximum of money for their efficiency and labour, and for that they are prepared to go even to the Arctic and the moon.

This book is addressed to serious students and devotees of Sikhism and to non-Sikh people, particularly to the Christian nations of the west, who worship and prostrate before Jesus Christ, their *Massihā* and believe him to eternally living Son of God, still wearing uncut hair and beard as the symbol of grace and holiness. Yet these very Christians not only fail to understand the hair and beard of the Sikhs, but laugh at it and sneer at it. For them the hair and beard of the Sikhs is heathenish and unholy, but the hair and beard of Christ is divine. Whether the ever changing hair and beard styles of the west have any significance or meaning, no one has ever cared to explain, but the turban, the hair, the beard and the sword of the Sikhs have great and lasting significance for those who seek spiritual enlightenment through Sikhism. I hope everyone who wishes to understand the unique personality and character of the Sikhs will care to read it with sympathy and understanding it deserves.

The turban and the hair of the Sikhs, I have already said, are closely and inseparably connected with Sikh baptism, which is close to Christian baptism in its pattern of administration. It is the key to all that is unique in Sikh history and the Sikh Way of life,

but the fundamental differences with Christian baptism are also conspicuous.

Dr D. Mickichen correctly states, "In the rite and initiation into Sikh religion, we have the nearest approach to the form of Christian baptism, but even in the symbolism of the rite there is a fundamental difference. The rite itself is older than its mention of it in the life of Gurū Gobīnd Singh. Its original and later purpose is to express communion and fellowship, and the Sikh *Pāhul* appears to be the only one form of expressing this fact of religious communion. It is interesting to notice that while devotion to the Gurū is included in the ceremony, the stress is laid on the visible Church but the emphasis is not laid on this side of the sacrament. The sacrament of baptism expresses in the first instance a relation of the individual to God, not to the community of the people."<sup>2</sup>

Baptism in Sikhism is not just a formal ceremony of conversion and attempt to make a Sikh appear different from the Hindus and Muslims, as it is generally believed. It is a total transformation of man from a secular being to a spiritual man, leading him to gradual progress and ultimate transfiguration into a divine Man. There is spiritual, moral, social and cultural transformation of the whole being of the person who accepts this baptism.

#### SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

Baptism in Sikhism is called spiritual rebirth (*punar janam*). The seeker dies to the world and is reborn in the Spirit of the Eternal Gurū. At the time of initiation, disciple consciousness (*Sikh-surti*) of the devotee blends with the Gurū consciousness (*Gurū-surti*), and this rebirth is actually felt in the form of some positive signs of moral and spiritual exaltation within the heart and the soul. This is so only if the novice is a dedicated and devoted seeker of spiritual enlightenment. As the novice progresses in his contemplative life by living according to moral code and spiritual



discipline of the *Rehitnāmās*, one feels the glow of eternity within his heart and soul, and the Power of the Infinite is within his reach. If the seed of this spiritual awakening does not flower within the heart of a baptized Sikh, it is because he has not received the baptism with a receptive heart and he has not led the contemplative and virtuous life, which the *Khālsā* Code of Conduct (*Rehitnāmās*) demand.

#### MORAL TRANSFORMATION

From the day a Sikh is baptized, he must shed fear and acquire the virtues of love, humility, service of the needy and live in continuous remembrance of God. He should neither take moral and spiritual practices to extremes of penance, fasting, celibacy, which more often than not lead to sexless purity of stones, nor should he indulge in the display of external piety and develop the dangerous pride of being a perfectionist in formalism and fundamentalism. He should also not allow the social liberties, allowed by Sikhism, to degenerate into libertinism of selfishness, greed and immoral life. Gurū Tegh Bahādur describes the ascetic temper and the exalted state attained by a spiritually disciplined and enlightened Sikh thus:

*jo nari dukh mai dukhū nahī mānai.*

*sukh snehū ari bhai nahī jā kai kanchan māṭī mānai.*

He who grieves not in grief,

From avarice, pleasures and fear is free,

And considers gold as good as dust; *Refrain*

Who indulges not in slander or flattery,

And is immune to greed, attachment and vanity,

Who in happiness and sorrow remains self-poised,

And is indifferent to all praise or blame;

Who discards all hopes and desires,

Who lives detached from the world,

And is not affected by lust or wrath,

In such a one, shines the Light of God.

The man who receives the Gurū's grace,  
 Discovers this secret of spiritual life,  
 Says Nānak: The soul of such a man blends with God.  
 As water mingles with water.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Tegh Bahādur, *Rāga Sorath*, p. 633.

This is the moral and spiritual state achieved by a seeker who practices Sikhism. It is this exaltation of character and depth of faith which has given innumerable martyrs to Sikh history.

#### SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Sikh baptism brings a dramatic social transformation. Even before he accepts baptism, he must renounce pride of race, caste, colour and social status. He must take a vow to identify himself completely with the lowliest of the low as human being:

*nīchā andarī nīch jāī nīchī hū atī nīchū.*  
*Nānakū tin kai sangī sāthī vaḍā siu kiā rīs.*  
 Lowliest among the low born,  
 I am lowliest of the low,  
 Nānak has identified himself  
 With the down-trodden and lowly;  
 What have I to do with upper classes?  
 Where the lowly are protected,  
 There abounds God's grace and benediction.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Nānak, *Srī Rāga*, p. 15.

Priestly class has been abolished in Sikhism. Anyone who is trained in conducting services can perform the function of birth, death and marriage ceremonies. Princes and paupers are to be treated as equals in the congregation. A Sikh must always be prepared to protect the weak, help the suffering down-trodden masses and defend his political and cultural freedom with the sword. Outward life of holiness and piety must be reflected in an inner virtuous life.

## CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

Sikhism is not merely a creed or an art of meditation and prayer but a living culture, which Toynbee places on his chart of thriving cultures of the present civilization. It has evolved its religious and philosophic base and its polity. It has presented a vision of a civilized human world, where diverse cultures must live together, retaining their identity, but reaching one another in the love and perception of God through different paths. They place higher values of spiritual life far above their sectarian interest. In every country they are admired for some remarkable qualities of their own, which comes to them naturally from their religion and teachings of their Gurūs.

A word now about the Rehitnāmās: Compendiums of Moral Laws and Spiritual Discipline. The *Ādi Gurū Granth* is full of such verses, giving exposition of Sikh ethics and spiritual discipline, many of which have been quoted in this book. Bhāī Gurdās, the Father of Sikh philosophy, has given an extensive analytical study of Sikh Moral Laws and Disciplinary Rules. But all these early scriptures are in poetry and in a quite difficult and symbolic language. Some of the mystical instructions in Sikh baptism were strictly supposed to remain oral instructions, passed on from heart to heart and from mind to mind like all mystical teachings and instructions in initiation ceremonies. But the layman could not understand scriptures; the novice who has yet to learn much about the faith required simple compendiums. Such compendiums in simple prose were also necessary to remove the misunderstanding created by outsiders or by rival cults. Out of this necessity emerged the Rehitnāmās, which are Compendiums of Moral Rules of spiritual life and discipline.

We have given complete translation of only authentic Rehitnāmās. These Rehitnāmās are summaries of Moral Rules for the Externals of Sikh faith, and they clearly tell a Sikh what he should do and what he should not do. They explain what is lawful for him and what is not lawful according to Sikh doctrines. They

give firm directives for a balanced social, spiritual and cultural life according to Sikh traditions and morality. They are considered to be the essence of Sikh teachings, whose application guarantees human beings a spiritually exalted harmonious life in this world and bliss and nearness to God hereafter. As Gurū Gobīnd Singh put it, he has given a Holy Order which has to be judged by their inner life and their moral and spiritual contributions to the human world.

By living according to *Rehit* and *Gurbānī* (Sacred Writings) a seeker places his whole existence in God's hands. The Rehitnāmās give religious significance to what may appear as the most mundane of activities. As such it is difficult for secularists with Christian background and Socialists grounded in Communist atheism to understand the Rehitnāmās of the Sikhs, the *Śariat* (*Shari'a*) of the Muslims or the precepts of Buddhist *Arahant* and *Bodhisattva*.

Christians believe, "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesars," while the Sikhs believe in the dictum: "Live like inspired apostles and never surrender your basic social, cultural and political freedom to any Caesar." These freedoms are your birthrights and you must uphold them not only for yourself but for all human beings. Having no divine legislation of its own, Christianity used Roman legal structure and Greek philosophy to construct its theology, mysticism and ecclesiastical organizations and laws. Sikhism from its very outset has integrated the domain of secular doctrines into an all encompassing religious and spiritual view of life.

The Rehitnāmās cannot be understood or appreciated by those who have not lived according to its moral and spiritual rules. It is never fully comprehended except by the sincere devotees. The Khālsā Rehit in all its spiritual depth and beauty transcends time and history. Each generation in Sikh society should seek to conform to its teachings and apply it anew to the conditions in which it finds itself. The creative process in each generation is not

to remake the law, but to reform men and human society to conform to the law of Khālsā Rehit. It is not Sikh religion which should be changed and modified to the ever changing and imperfect nature of human beings, but human beings should undergo moral and spiritual discipline so as to attain the high spiritual state of a Sikh saint and enlightened person. It is the human mind that should be changed to conform to the divine laws of the Khālsā Code, and under no circumstances should truths and ideals of lasting moral and spiritual values be changed to the whims and tastes of human mind. Religious laws of the Khālsā Rehit without truthful living and spiritual practices is mere theatrical show of external piety, which is strongly condemned in the Sikh Scriptures. Religious meditations without adhering to the laws of moral and spiritual discipline of the Khālsā Code of Conduct is sheer hypocrisy. To bow before the threshold of divine laws of Rehit is the first duty of a Sikh, who wish to enter the path of spiritual exaltation step by step.

Only these particular Rehitnāmās, the English translation of which is given for the first time in this book, should be considered authentic. Sir Attar Singh published translation of two Rehitnāmās which were not only literal translations, but so crude that they have created quite a lot of misunderstanding among those, who are not able to read the original.

Far back in the eleventh century, Alberūnī (born. 973, a distinguished scholar of Arabic, Greek and Hindu sciences and philosophy) wrote, "Indian scribes are careless, and do not take pains to produce correct and well-collated copies. In consequences, the highest results of the author's mental development are lost by their negligence, and his book becomes already in the first or second copy so full of faults that the text appears as something entirely new, which neither a scholar nor one familiar with the subject, whether Hindu or Muslim, could any longer understand. It will sufficiently illustrate the matter if we tell the reader that we have sometimes written down a word from the mouth of Hindus,

taking great pains to fix its pronunciation, and that afterwards when we repeated it to them, they had great difficulty in recognizing it.”<sup>3</sup>

Much worst has been the fate of *Janam Sākhīs* and later *Rehitnāmās*. The *Gurbilāses* which were in Braj *Bhāṣā*; a difficult language, and in poetry, suffered lesser mutilation. But some of the *Janam Sākhīs* and *Rehitnāmās* are beyond recognition. The older the copy of *Janam Sākhīs* or *Rehitnāmās*, the better it is.

The case of what is known as Prahlād Rāi's *Rehitnāmā* is typical.<sup>4</sup> A critical study of its date, colophon, introductory verses and language makes it clear that either it is seriously distorted version of some older *Rehitnāmā*, or it is a creation of some people in the early British period, and popularized by them in the name of Prahlād Rāi to give it credibility. Out of forty verses of this *Rehitnāmā* only about ten are genuine in theme and spirit, even though the language of those verses is of the middle nineteenth century.

The Introductory lines of this *Rehitnāmā*, allegedly written by Prahlād Rāi, state that “Gurū Gobīnd Singh addressed this *Rehitnāmā* to *Udāsī* Daryāi on Thursday, *Māgh* 5, *Vikramī Samvat* 1752, that is 1697 at Abchal Nagar (Nander in *Mahārāshtra*).”<sup>5</sup> The colophon in the closing lines states: “Gurumukh Singh has written this New *Rehitnāmā* (*Rehitnāmā tum likho navīnī*) at the behest of Gurū Gobīnd Singh.” All these statement are self-contradictory and contravene the established facts of history. For example: (i) Even the *Khālsā* Holy Order was created in 1699 A.D., two years after the alleged date of writing this *Rehitnāmā*, (ii) Gurū Gobīnd Singh was in Abchal Nagar (Nander) only in the year 1708 for the last few months of his life, (iii) In 1697 he was at Anāndpur. The *Khālsā* Holy Order had not been created and obviously no *Khālsā* *Rehitnāmā* was written in that year by anyone.

The punishment for transgression of the Rules of Code of Conduct in all authentic *Rehitnāmās* is compassionate and very light for truly repentant disciples, while the unrepentants are left

to their fate and ignored. But in this Rehitnāmā of Prahād Rāi, everyone who commits the slightest error is either sent to the lowest hell or condemned to suffer from leprosy. The language is shocking and abusive. In one place it says, "those who deviate from the laws of Rehitnāmā are seeds and offsprings of *malechhās*" (Muslims or British). There is a clear indication that much of the Rehitnāmā was written during early British period of Indian history. The rulers who wear *ṭopī* (cap or hat) are taken for granted and those who bow to these rulers with *ṭopī* (hat) would go to hell. *Ṭopī* became popular in the Puñjāb only under the British rule. The Mughals wore turbans and never a *ṭopī* of any kind. A Sikh who has shaved his hair and beard is an apostate from the Khālāsā Holy Order. It is immaterial whether he wears a turban or a cap. A Sikh who keeps hair and beard would not wear a cap or a hat under any circumstances. These curses, that were introduced into the structure of the new Rehitnāmā of the mid-nineteenth century, are clumsy, crude defence mechanism against political and cult offensives set in motion by Christian and other Reform cults. The new Rehitnāmā (*Navīn Rehitnāmā*) was written by some orthodox Sikhs, probably to stem the tide of Christian movement, which was backed by the New Rulers with *ṭopī*, who offered tempting positions and jobs to those who were prepared to discard Sikh symbols, put on a *ṭopī* (hat) and become a *Sāhib*.

The Rehitnāmās grew like mushrooms in the nineteenth century. I saw a manuscript with a person in Paṭiālā having eighty Rehitnāmās in it. Someone took the manuscript from him and never returned it. The *Nirmalā* scholar, Puṇḍit Tārā Singh Narotam in his *Srī Gurū Tīrath Saṅgreh*, (1884 A.D.), refers to 21 Rehitnāmās, though he does not quote them. Bhāi Bhagwān Singh, a student of Bābā Sumer Singh, in his work *Bar Bimal Bibek Barad Granth* mentions 37 Rehitnāmās. The Rehitnāmās, the author has quoted, are by the contemporaries of Gurū Gobind Singh and based on quite old manuscripts. They are quite authentic, but latter manuscripts should be read cautiously and

never accepted in their totality.

The Sikh Code of Conduct: *Sikh Rehit Maryādā*, published by S.G.P.C., is not an authentic document. The Introductory note says that they had consulted eminent scholars and saints. In 1946, I contacted theologians and saints like Bhāi Sāhib Vir Singh, Bhāi Sāhib Raṇdhīr Singh, Saṁt Gurbachan Singh Bhinderānwāle and about thirty other theologians and scholars. They told me that they were not consulted. On the other hand their protests against some of the clauses, such as reducing the reading of the *Anandī Sāhib* in Sikh baptism to only 6 verses, and also cutting down the traditional *Rehīrās* given in *Pañj Granthīs*, fell on deaf ears. Later on in 1970, they changed the four *Takhats* to five and callously ignored strong protests by the author and almost all leading scholars and saints, which included a retired *Jathedār* of Akāl Takhat, a retired Head *Granthī* of the Golden Temple, National Professor of Sikhism, Sirdār Kapūr Singh.

Not only the author, but the whole Sikh Community owes a lasting gratitude to a number of dignitaries and leaders of Britain, who raised their voice against enforcing law of crash-helmets on the Sikhs; a law in the making of which they were not consulted. The first to express generous sympathy was Councillor Fred Balcombe, Lord Mayor of Manchester, who on hearing that Mr. Sunder Singh Sāgar had been fined £ 5 for riding a motor-cycle without helmet, paid the fine for him. The Lord Mayor wrote to Mr. Sunder Singh Sāgar: "I was most impressed with your sincerity and religious beliefs, and as I would not like a Manchester citizen of your calibre to go to prison over such a matter, I have taken it upon myself to settle your fine and have received a receipt so that as far as they are concerned, the matter is closed. I believe that a man of your integrity will not take exception to what I have done, and I would be most grateful if you would telephone me to make an appointment to see how I can assist you to have the matter ventilated through other channels."

This was truly Christian sympathy and generosity. It was Lord



Mayor Councillor Fred Balcombe who personally asked Prime Minister Wilson to revive in the Parliament, the issue of Sikh motor-cyclists and their religious aversion to wear crash helmets. It was at this time that Mr. Clement Freud, Liberal M.P. for Isles Ely wrote strongly against the law, enforcing the Sikhs to wear helmets, and Mr. Frank Hatton, Labour M.P. for Mosside and Mr. Cyril Smith, Liberal M.P. planned to present a Bill. Mr. Winston S. Churchill (grandson of Mr. Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Britain during World War II) then presented a motion in the House to recognize that the Sikhs fighting with Great Britain in two world wars were exempted from wearing steel helmets in the front line of the battlefield.

Referring to these pioneering efforts of Mr. Winston S. Churchill, Mr. Sidney Bidwell, whose private Bill has ultimately secured the exemption from wearing crash helmets, said in the Parliament on June 23, 1976, "I am grateful to my colleagues in my own party and to Honourable Member for Stretford (Mr. Winston S. Churchill) who is a modest fellow. Although he spoke powerfully and I am sure great attention will be paid to what he had to say; he forgot to say that he was the veritable pioneer. I do not think he was fully aware at that time that I had considerable Sikh Community; a little larger than his own. But he was the beam from the word 'go', while I had not reached at a final determination in my own mind. I think that it is worth mentioning in this committee. Of course history is on his side."<sup>6</sup>

The *Sahajdhārī* Sikhs like the novices in all higher religions, occupied a very important place in the history of Sikhism, but unfortunately no Sikh scholar has ever written on the relation of the *Sahajdhārīs* with the *Khālsā*. It must be noted and I have repeatedly stressed that clean-shaven apostates from Sikhism are not *Sahajdhārīs*. The door of the Sikh faith is always open for the apostates, renegades and refractory elements, but when they sincerely repent, turn back on their past life and accept the *Khālsā* baptism.

Some years ago I happened to see an authentic *Sahajdhārī Rehitnāmā* in a Manuscript copy of Bhāi Manī Singh's *Sikhān dī Bhagatmālā*, which was not found in the printed version of the book. Bhāi Manī Singh says that Gurū Gobind Singh signed all the ten clauses of the Sahajdhārī Rehitnāmā, which was essential for all novices coming closer to Sikhism from other religions. I have added a whole chapter on the subject and commented on every clause. Until recently, the Sahajdhārīs were considered to be the right wing of the Sikh *Pañth*. Sahajdhārī saints were as orthodox in observing Sikh rites as the *Khālsā* Sikhs. But they choose to remain unbaptized, because they found it difficult in those dark days to lead the life of the *Khālsā* in which one had always to be prepared for martyrdom. The political postures of *Akālī Dal* and the venomous propaganda done by *Āryā Smājists* during the first four decades of this century, backed by intensely communal *Urdu* papers of *Puñjāb* has done considerable damage to Hindu-Sikh relations, which is the further cause of Sahajdhārīs being disowned in Sikh Political Institutions, though the constitution of S.G.P.C. gives a place of pride to them. A Sahajdhārī Sikh has never been nominated to the S.G.P.C., which should have been a convention. The main reason for the artificial gap that has been created between Hindus and Sikhs is that Hindu and Sikh politicians who claim to be the saviours of their religions and people are either ignorant of Sikhism and Hinduism and their past historic relations, or knowing full well what these religions really are, wish to use them as their political weapons to incite communal zeal and through it their cheap popularity. When these Hindu and Sikh politicians come close to one another, they declare that there is Hindu Sikh unity, but when they part company, they loudly proclaim Hindu Sikh differences. Under such a situation, there is no dearth of politicians in *Akālī Dal*, who loudly declare that Sikhism is much closer to Communism than it so Hinduism and Islām. It is a tragic era when the fate of Hinduism and Sikhism and their votaries is being decided in the Headquarters of political

parties; even in the Head quarters of Communist Party, who are vowed to atheism, materialism, as Marx understood it, and to establish totalitarian system of establishing Communist culture and eliminating religious culture.

This book also tries to make the first attempt to give briefly the correct position of the relation between Sikhism and its missionary groups of the past; commonly known as *Sampardāyās*, traditional missionary groups. They are not *Sampardāyās* in the Hindu sense, where each *Sampardāya* has separate deity, a separate gurū and separate ideology within or outside the Vedic lore.

The Sikh Community owes its deep gratitude to Lt. General Sir. Reginald Savoury who served with the Sikhs for 25 years, and who did not forget them in the hour of their need in peace time in his own country. He has been quoted in the Parliament, and his statements have been greatly instrumental in the success of this cause. Mr. Sidney Bidwell, Labour M.P. Ealing-Southall, presented the Motor-cycle Crash-Helmet Religious Exemption Bill on January 28, 1975, and was supported by 11 M.P.'s. At the committee stage, the Bill received strong support from Mr. Kenneth Marks, Mr. Frank Hatton, Mr. Bernard Weathill, (Deputy Speaker, House of Commons), Mr. Winston S. Churchill, Mr. Cyril Smith, Mr. Andrew Faulds, Mr. Anthony Steen, Mr. Russell Kerr, Mr. John Ovenden and others. The Bill was presented in the House of Lords by the Rt. Hon, Lord Avebury, and was strongly supported by Lord Mowbray, Earl Grey, Lord Wells Pestell. I have recorded the opinions of those Honourable Members of the House of Commons and the Noble Lords of the House of Lords in Chapter 18. Some of these opinions will, I am sure, be remembered and quoted in the future literature of Sikh studies. I am grateful to Mr. Winston S. Churchill for kindly sending me the published Reports of the House of Commons debates on the Turban issue, and to the Rt. Hon, Lord Avebury for sending me the published Reports of the House of Lords debates, which the author attended. The manuscript of this book had been read by

Lord Avebury, and he not only strongly advocated the cause of the Sikh turban but also generously quoted from the manuscript of this book, made available to him for his speech in the House of Lords. I will never forget the noble gesture and friendly concern of Mr. Sidney Bidwell, who on the conclusion of the debate in the House of Lords took me in his car all the way from the Parliament house to my residence in Southall in the early hours of the morning (about 4 a.m.) on October 5, 1976. He and a number of members of the Parliament still continue to help the Sikh community in U.K. in all their problems.

I was in England from December 1975 to March 1977 and again for 3 months in 1978 on my way back from U.S.A. I am grateful to the Home Office for giving me liberal extensions for stay in Britain for research work. I received tremendous help from my friend Mr. Vidyā Sāgar Ānaṇḍ, journalist and writer and from the Directors and Staff of the Oriental Room and other department of British Museum Library and the India Office Library in London. I am very grateful to them for all the facilities they gave. This research work was possible because Mr. Jojan Singh Sidhū, Mrs. Giān Kaur, Mr. Pritam Singh Sidhū, Mrs. Harminḍer Kaur (all from my home village Mansūrpur, Jalandhar Distt.) extended me the most generous hospitality in their homes in Southall, Middlesex. The warm affection and a whole year's most comfortable board and lodging, arranged by these noble friends, is a moral and spiritual debt, which I may never be able to repay to these friends. I am also grateful to Dr Surjit Kaur of Leicester for very kindly attending to my health problems.

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. During World War II, Dr Gaṇḍā Singh wrote a series of such articles in *Khālāsā Samāchār*, Amritsar, in which he tried to prove, mostly on the basis of dubious and concocted evidence that Sikh warriors and martyrs like Bābā Dīp Singh and Bābā Gurbakhash Singh wore steel helmets in the

battlefields. Among the historical relics preserved in the sanctum sanctorum of Akāl Takhat, we still have the weapons and the quoits worn by Bābā Dīp Singh in his last battle. The quoits were worn on the heads, and the *Nihāngs* still wear them. We have the paintings of Sikh warriors of Raṇjīt Singh's army, and none of them shows a Sikh warrior wearing helmet. Hindu and Muslim soldiers were employed by Sikh Gurūs and later by *Misal Sardārs* and Raṇjīt Singh, for whom they had to acquire and keep helmets in their armoury. Bhāī Sāhib Raṇdhīr Singh strongly criticized and condemned these compromising researches of Dr Gaṇḍā Singh in his pamphlet, *Bhāī Bhujān ko Bhāī Bharoso*; and the support given by some Akālī leaders to these fake researches.

2. *Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics*, Ed : James Hastings, vol. ii.
3. Alberūnī's *India*, p. 18.
4. Dr Surinder Singh Kohli in his book *The Life and Ideals of Gurū Gobind Singh* call it Rehitnāmā of Pahlād Singh (p. 94). Piārā Singh Padam in his book *Rehitnāme* (Pb) also refers it as Rehitnāmā of Pahlāl Singh. In one of the oldest copy preserved in British Museum bearing No 1416, the name of the writer has been mentioned Pahlād Rāi.
5. Māgh Vadī 5, 1752. Bk was Saturday and not Thursday as mentioned. (For details see Pāl Singh Pūrewāl's *Jaṇtari : 500 Years*). Professor Piārā Singh Padam has quoted a version of this Rehitnāmā in his book, which mention the day as Sunday, which is also not correct.
6. *House of Commons Official Report : Standing Committee*, June 23, 1976, p. 20.

## *Part One*

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*The Elixir of Life: Amrit  
The Turban and The Sword  
In the Spiritual Traditions of the World.*

Says Farīd: I am always worried about my turban.  
Lest it be soiled with dirt,  
My foolish mind realizes not,  
My very head will be in dust.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Farīd, Sloka. 26, p. 1379.*

God first created the Two-Edged Sword:  
Symbolizing the two Attributes as Creator and Destroyer.  
And then He manifested the whole phenomenal world;  
He created Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva  
As divine instruments of the Existence of the universe.  
And thus God brought into being,  
The playful drama of Nature: *Qudrat*.

*Dasam Granth, Gurū Gobīnd Singh, p.*

Once they enter the gates of the inner court,  
They are to wear linen vestments.  
They shall wear linen turban,  
And linen drawers on their loins.

*Old Testament, Ezekiel, 44:18-19.*

For the Lord accepts the service of the people,  
He crowns his humble folk with victory.  
Let His faithful servant exult in triumph,  
Let him shout for joy as they kneel before Him.  
Let the high praises of God be on their lips,  
And Two-Edged Sword in their hands.

*Old Testament, Psalms, 149: 3-6.*

My Community will never decay  
So Long as they wear turbans.

*Prophet Muḥammed.*

## CHAPTER I

### THE ELIXIR OF LIFE : AMRIT IN WORLD RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

In the Sikh Scriptures, we frequently come across such words as *rasāyaṇ* : alchemy, *pāras* : philosopher's stone, *amrit* : nectar or Elixir of Life, *manī* : imperishable Jewel of mind. It is not possible to understand the symbolic character and the figurative and conceptual nature of these terms till we study their origin, development and usage in the human civilization.

These symbols and terms do not belong to any particular religion or any particular period of civilization. It is the nature of a symbol to be as manifest as the life, from which it grew and yet it retains its character, its organic unity within the diversity of its aspects. These invisible symbols and their visible forms can be understood only if we sum up the history of Amrit: Elixir of Life, *elixir vitae*, the Philosopher's stone.

Elixir is a term which was applied to various solutions employed in the attempt to transmute base metals into gold. The Elixir of Life was believed to be a substance which would prolong indefinitely the life of any person who consumed it. The word is derived from the Arabic term *al Iksir*, which means philosopher's stone. In Sanskrit, the Philosopher's Stone is called *paraśmanī* and in Puṇjābī *pāras*.

The doctrine or the postulate on which alchemy is based, hold that metals differ from each other in degree but not in nature, and that anyone of the baser metals like lead or copper may be transmuted into a more perfect metal like silver or gold. Minerals and metals are supposed to be living beings born in the earth.



Egypt and China have been considered the original home of alchemy. A great many stories are told about the mystic origin of their art. It was said to have been taught by the fallen angels, by Isis, by Mariam, sister of Moses. Invention of the holy mystery is ascribed to philosopher Democritus of Greece (460-360 B.C.), in whose writings it became indissolubly interwoven with thoughts of nature mysticism.

The Stoics, Greek philosophers from Zeno to Marcus Aurelius, for whom virtue is the only good and virtuous man is the one who has attained happiness, believed that the whole cosmos was permeated with the Divine, and all phenomenon of life were emanation of it. They did not reject the claims to the supernatural raised by alchemists, and they thus became ardent defenders of alchemy, magic and astrology. The basis of their alchemy was the theory of Democritus: "Nature overcomes nature, nature rejoices in nature, nature rules nature."<sup>1</sup>

The aim of the alchemists is to find a living substance, 'Elixir' or 'Spirit', which when combined with the body of imperfect metal, will change it into a perfect metal. It is called the 'Philosopher's Stone'. This stone is afterwards ground down, and during grinding it is sprinkled with water and mixed with drugs. The liquid obtained in this way is considered Elixir. The Arabic scholar Al Kindi opposed the alchemists, but Dubais and Razes refuted his objections. Avicenna (Ibn Sina) opposed it, but Tughrai defended alchemy against Avicenna. Dubs and F. Sherwood Taylor believe that the origin of alchemy is to be sought in the China of the fourth century B.C. They believe that alchemy reached the west through Chinese travellers.

The Vajrayāna aimed to obtain an incorruptible body of diamond, not subject to becoming. This diamond body is called *siddha deha* or *divya deha*: divine body or *gīān (jñāna) deha*: body of wisdom. Commenting on these symbolically presented myths, Mircea Eliade says, "A myth is more eloquent than historical reality, and enables us to apprehend the deeper meaning of a

historical fact better than the documents that record it.”<sup>2</sup>

Marco Polo describes Yogis, who lived for 150 or 200 years. He says, “These people make use of a strange beverage, for they make a potion of sulphur and quicksilver mixt together and this they drink twice every month. This, they say, gives them long life; and it is a potion they are used to take from their childhood.”<sup>3</sup>

Francois Bernier, writing in Aurangzeb’s period mentions alchemists, “Who know how to make gold and to prepare mercury so admirably, that one or two grains taken in the morning restore the body to perfect health and so fortify the stomach that it digests very well and can hardly be satisfied.”<sup>4</sup>

Writing on Indian Yogis, Amīr Khusro says, “They can tell future events by the breath of their nostrils, according as the right or left orifice is more or less open. They can also inflate another’s body by their own breath. In the hills on the borders of Kashmir there are many such people..... They can also fly like fowls in the air, however improbable it may seem. They can also, by putting antimony on their eyes, make themselves invisible at pleasure. Those only can believe all this who have seen it with their own eyes.”<sup>5</sup>

There is a well-known legend in *Mahābhārata* about the origin of amrita (*amṛta*): Nectar, Elixir, “Once the gods having assembled on the summit on Mount Merū, Narāyaṇ told Brahmā to churn the ocean with the help of gods and demons in order to obtain amrita. (I, 17). Viṣṇu and Brahmā prevailed upon Ananta (Shesha Nāga) to bring the mountain Mandara. Indra placed Mandara on the back of tortoise king. Mandara was made the churning stuff and Vāsuki the cord, the Asura holding him by the hood, while the gods held it by the tail. After churning milky waters, there came out of it clarified butter, Sṛī, Surādevī etc.” Professor Williams has rendered the story in verse as it is given in *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

Then from the sea uprose the cool-rayed moon  
Which Mahādev seized,  
Terrific poison next issued from the waters;

This the snake gods claimed as their own.  
 Then seated on a lotus beauty's bright goddess;  
 Priceless *Srī* arose out of the waves;  
 And with her, robed in white  
 Come forth Dhanwantri, the god's physician.  
 High in the hand he bore the cup of nectar:  
 Life giving draught—longed for by gods and demons.  
 They had the demons forcibly borne off the cup,  
 And they drained the precious beverage.  
 Had not the mighty Viṣṇu interposed,  
 Bewildering them, he gave it to the gods;  
 Where at incensed, the demon troops assailed  
 The host of heaven, but they with strength renewed,  
 Quaffing the draught, struck down their foes,  
 Who fell headlong through space to lowest depths of hell.

The Philosopher's Stone: *sparaśmaṇī*, is one of the most interesting and mysterious symbols which has given rise to great thoughts and discoveries in the realm of mysticism, philosophy and science. The eternal vision behind it is the *prima materia*. The recent discoveries in the realm of nuclear physics now suggest that "there is the same all-pervading creatively active energy behind all phenomenon. The works of Eighty-four Siddhas preserved and written in symbolic language *Sandhyābhāṣā*: Twilight language, are still preserved and studied in Tibet. Every language is incapable of expressing the highest experiences of the Spirit. The indescribable can be understood only by the initiate or the experienter.<sup>6</sup>

The *Yogatattva*, a later *Upaniṣad* mentions such *siddhīs* as "clairaudience, clairvoyance, transportation across vast distances in a short time, yogic vocal powers, yogic power of transforming one's self into any form desired, yogic methods of making oneself invisible, and the power of transmuting iron and other baser metals into gold by smearing it with a yogin's urine and excreta."<sup>7</sup>

Gurū Nāgārjuna, (not the founder of Madhyamika Buddhist

philosophy), who lived around the middle of seventh century A.D., is said to have changed an iron mountain into copper, but when he was about to change it into gold, Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī warned him that gold would only cause greed and quarrel among men. In the case of Nāgārjuna's experiment it happened that even his iron begging-bowl turned to gold. Once a thief thought of stealing the golden bowl. Nāgārjuna, reading the mind of the thief took the bowl and threw it out of the window. The thief was so perplexed and ashamed that he entered the Gurū's hut, bowed at his feet and asked: "Venerable Sir, why did you do this? I came here as a thief. Now that you have thrown away what I desired and made a gift of what I intended to steal, my desire has vanished and stealing has become senseless and superfluous." The Gurū, however, replied: "Whatever I possess should be shared with others. Eat and drink and take whatever you like, so that you need never more steal."<sup>8</sup>

"Gurū Nāgārjuna, after having rescued the Elixir of Life from a selfish hermit, refused to make use of it for the prolongation of his own bodily existence, but passed it on to his disciples, while he himself sacrificed his life for the benefit of his fellow-beings when great distress had come over his country. When Nāgārjuna sacrificed everything he possessed, gave away his body as his last gift, the king died at the feet of the Gurū."<sup>9</sup>

Thus the wise ones do not use the Elixir of Life to preserve the body beyond its time, but to attain the higher life, which does not know the fear of death. He who would utilize it only for the preservation of his physical existence, would die from within and continue to exist merely as a 'living corpse'. In selfish hands even the Elixir of Life turns into poison, just as truth in the mouth of a fool turns into falsehood, and virtue into bigotry in the narrow-minded. However, he who has found the Philosopher's Stone, the radiant jewel (*mañi*) of the enlightened mind (*bodhi-citta*) within his own heart, transforms his mortal consciousness into that of immortality, perceives the infinite in the finite and turns *Samśāra* into *Nirvāṇa*.<sup>10</sup>

In the mystic language of alchemy, mercury was identified with *prima materia*, but what was meant in this case was not the metal, but the 'mercury of the philosophers', which was the essence or soul of mercury, freed from the four Aristotelian elements; earth, water, fire and air, or rather from the qualities which these represent and in which the material world appears to us.

Buddha says in *Udāna* VIII, "Verily, there is a realm, where there is neither the solid nor the fluid, neither heat nor motion, neither this world nor any other world, neither sun nor moon.... There is, O monks, an Unborn, Unoriginated, Uncreated, Unformed.... without which escape from the world of the born, the originated, the created, the formed would not be possible. He who has realized this, has truly found the Philosopher's Stone, the precious jewel (*maṇi*), the *prima materia* of the human mind, nay, of the very faculty of consciousness in whatever form of life it might appear. This was the real aim of all great alchemists, who knew that 'mercury' stood for the creative forces of higher consciousness, which had to be freed from the gross elements of matter in order to attain the state of perfect purity and radiance, the state of Enlightenment..... The mind alone is the radiant jewel, from which all things borrow their temporal reality."<sup>11</sup> That is why Gurū Nānak calls the mind *māṇakū maṇi*, (the Jewel), and Gurū Arjan's greatest composition, composed on the pattern of *Gīta Govinda* with 24 *Aṣṭapadīs*, is called *Sukhmanī*.<sup>12</sup>

In Sanskrit literature the word *amṛit* (*amṛta*) is used in the following senses: (i) immortality, (ii) nectar which confers immortality, (iii) nectar like food, (iv) antidote to poison, (v) clarified butter and (vi) gold. In the *Ādi Gurū Granth* the word *amrit* is used in the following senses: (i) milk, (ii) ambrosia, nectar, (iii) water sanctified by the touch of the Gurū, or by the mystic influence of the Holy Word, (iv) sacramental food, (v) *amrit jal*: water sanctified by holy person, (vi) *amrit gīān*: divine knowledge, (vii) *amrit khānā*: ambrosial food and (viii) *amrit dṛiṣṭi*: eyes shedding nectar, grace of the Saint or the Gurū.

Sikh baptism from Gurū Nānak to Gurū Gobīnd Singh, has been basically baptism of water, sanctified by divine Word and apostolic Grace. This baptismal water is called Amrit: Elixir of Life, the immortalizing nectar. There are countless symbolic references to this amrit in the Sikh Scriptures. Bhāi Gurdās has vividly portrayed the mystical experiences of Amrit (Elixir of life) in his writings. He says, "Within the consciousness of the true seeker, the ambrosial rays of His Presence falls on the hearts of his worshippers. Amrit (Nectar) continuously rains within the self and the Unstruck Music (*Anhad Śabad*) rings with all its celestial symphonies within the heart."<sup>13</sup>

"Precious like gold become the Sikh discipline leads to the revelation of inner being: *dib-deh*: astral body. The inner eyes of the mind and the soul (*dib-drist*) opens to a new vista of infinite. The consciousness is awakened by the Word of God. The Divine Light illumines the whole self. Such are the blessings of the aesthetic revelation of Sikhism."<sup>14</sup> Commenting on these verses of Bhāi Gurdās, the eminent theologian and martyr, Bhāi Manī Singh says, "It is said, the gods drink the amrita (nectar) to prolong their life to the age of Brahmā, but even after drinking this nectar they are not able to free their hearts from jealousy, mutual rivalry and power lust. But the true Gurū, Bābā Nānak gives to his disciples the amrita, Nectar of Divine Name, the Word of God: *Śabad*. Those who inwardly listen to the resounding music of the Word in their contemplative meditations, know from their inner illumination, their real self (*ātam svarūp*), and after this inner experiential knowledge, they fear not death. All their cravings and appetites like lust, pride, wrath, greed and attachment disappear. They exercise control over them and are free from their evil manifestations. So the Name of God, the word: *mantram*, imparted by the true Gurū is the real Elixir of Life: Amrit."<sup>15</sup>

"Just as the Philosopher's Stone is able to transmute seven metals (silver, copper, tin, lead steel, mercury, zinc) into gold, so also the divine Word of the Gurū transforms the four castes

(*Varnas*) of the Hindus and the followers of the four Semitic Books into illumined Saints alike in mind and spirit. They rise above their sectarian life and are exalted to the station of fully illumined station of union with God.

"The divine Word of the Gurū is considered to be Pāras: Philosopher's Stone, the very touch of which changes base metals into gold. Similarly all castes and classes are transformed by the Gurū's Word into pure enlightened Sages: *Gurmukhs*. Just as a sandalwood tree makes all fruit bearing and even barren trees in its neighbourhood fragrant with sweet smell, so also the Philosopher's Stone (Pāras) changes steel and base metals to gold. But gold cannot change other base metals into gold. The Word of Gurū Nānak inspires and transmutes all seekers of high and low castes, and changes even sinners and evil-doers with its divine fragrance, and thus liberates all human beings irrespective of their race, caste, colour and creed. Thus, those who accept the *Charnamrit* (Gurū Nānak's baptism) are initiated into Sikh spiritual discipline. They become as precious morally and spiritually as gems and diamonds in real life.

"Just as an oyster takes a drop of rain and changes it into a pearl, so also the disciples of Gurū Nānak receive the Word of the Gurū and enshrine the Name of God in their hearts. From their hearts come out words of spiritual Wisdom, which are as precious and priceless as pearls and gems. When they understand and imbibe the spirit of the divine Word, the portals of their inner vision open to the highest spiritual revelation."<sup>16</sup>

This is the miracle of transmuting ordinary persons to divine and dynamic persons; human as well superhuman. Gurū Nānak says, "The Light of the true Gurū is far more resplendent than the light of a hundred moons and a thousand suns. Such a Gurū (perfectly illumined Apostle) can change men into gods (Superhuman beings) with their transmuting touch."<sup>17</sup>

Gurū Gobiṇḍ Singh said, "Through his baptism of the double-edged Sword, he changed sparrows (meek people obsessed with

slave morality) into fiercest fighting birds, who will even tear the Hawks to pieces. "In the 300 years of their history after the creation of the Khālsā Holy Order, India was invaded ten times during the eighteenth century by the Hawks of Iran and Afghanistan— Nādir Shāh and Ahmed Shāh Abdālī—and the manner in which the Sikhs threw them out of Puñjāb and became rulers of the whole of north-west India including Kashmīr, is history.

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6. Lāmā Anagarika Govinda, *The Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*: p. 53.
7. Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, p. 130.
8. Lāmā Anagarika Govinda, *The Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*, p. 55.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.
12. Like *Gitagovinda*, Gurū Arjan's compositions is in 24 Cantos, *Aṣṭapadīs*, and each *Aṣṭapadī* is preceded by *Sloka* and the whole composition strung to *Rāgas*.
13. Bhāi Gurdās, *Vār*. 11, *Paurī*. 1.
14. Bhāi Gurdās, *Vār*. 11, *Paurī*. 7.
15. Bhāi Maṇī Singh, *Sikhān dī Bhakatmālā*, Sākhī. 7.
16. *Ibid.*, Sākhī. 7.
17. *Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Nānak, *Āsā dī Vār*, *Sloka*. 1. pp. 462-63.



## CHAPTER 2

### HERITAGE OF THE TURBAN

Once they enter the gates of the inner court,  
They are to wear linen vestments;  
They shall wear linen turban,  
And linen drawers on their loins.

*Old Testament, Ezekiel 44: 18-19.*

The word turban is found in this form in European languages only—English: *turban, turband*; French: *turban, tulband*; German: *turban*; Italian, Spanish and Portugese: *turbante*; Dutch: *tulband*; Rumanian: *tulipan*; and it is generally traced to the Persian, *sarband*. In Turkish *sarik* is the usual name for turban.

It was in the ancient Egyptian civilization that the turban was an ornamental head dress. They called it *pjr* from which perhaps is derived the word *pugri*, so commonly used in India. The Egyptians removed the turban at the time of mourning, a custom which prevailed in the Puñjāb upto the end of the last century. The Sikh apostle, Bhāi Gurdās, humorously narrates an incident in his *Vārs* (Poetic Writings), that when an elderly Puñjābī came home with his turban off, the women folk took it to be a sign of mourning and started weeping and wailing, although no one was dead. The old man's turban off his head gave a false alarm.<sup>1</sup>

### TURBAN IN OLD TESTAMENT

PUT ON THE TURBAN AS

THE LORD HAS COMMANDED MOSES

One of the Commands of God to Moses was to wear turban as the

symbol of prophethood, holiness and divine power; a command which was obeyed by the Jews and the Muslims for centuries and ignored or forgotten by the Christians:

They made the tunics of finely woven linen for Aaron and his sons, the turban of fine linen, the breeches of fine twined linen, the girdles of fine twined linen..... as the lord had commanded Moses.

Exodus, 39: 27-29.

#### THE TURBAN, THE TUNIC AND THE DRAWER AS THE PRIESTLY VESTMENT

All these costumes, the turban, the robe and the drawer continued to be essential parts of the priestly dress among the Hebrews after the exile. They all have an old independent history, and it is not easy to explain how they came to be combined into an independent priestly uniform:

These are the vestments they must make:

pectoral, ephod, robe, embroidered tunic, turban and girdle.

Exodus, 28:4.

#### THE TURBAN AS SYMBOL OF DEDICATION, CONSECRATION AND ESSENTIAL FOR ANOINTMENT

The anointing of men with missionary zeal and prophetic mission required some ceremonial activities like pouring oil and fixing some mark on the turban, which was actually the crown of priests. In a more refined form these ceremonies have symbolically survived in the Puñjāb till today.<sup>2</sup>

They made a rosette of pure gold as the symbol of their holy dedication and inscribed on it as the engraving on a seal, "Holy to the Lord," and they fastened on it a violet brand to fix it on the turban at the top, as the Lord had commanded Moses. .

Exodus, 39:30-31.

He then put the turban upon his head and set the gold rosette as a

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symbol of holy dedication on the front of the turban, as the Lord had commanded him. Moses then took the anointing oil, anointed the tabernacle, and all that was within it and consecrated it.

Leviticus, 8:9-11.

Set the turban on his head, and the symbol of holy dedication on the turban. Take the anointing oil, pour it on his head and anoint him.

Exodus, 29:6-7.

You are to make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it: "Consecrated to Yahweh" as a man engraves a seal. You will secure this to the turban with a ribbon of violet-purple; it is to be placed on the front of the turban.... The tunic you must weave of fine linen, and make a turban of fine linen, and a girdle, the work of a skilled embroiderer.

Exodus 28:36-39.

#### TURBAN AS SYMBOL OF ROYALTY

The turban was the symbol of royalty and was used in place of the crown. It was an important article of kingly regalia. Throughout the Islāmic world it continues to be used in place of the crown where monarchy still exists:

For Jerusalem's sake I will speak out,  
Until her right shines forth like the sunrise,  
Her deliverance like a blazing torch,  
Until the nations see the triumph of your right,  
And all kings see your glory.  
Then you shall be called by a new name,  
Which the Lord will pronounce with his own lips.  
You will be a glorious crown in the Lord's hand,  
A kingly turban in the hand of your God.

Isaiah, 62:2-4.

#### TURBAN AS THE SYMBOL OF STOIC COURAGE IN THE FACE OF GRIEF

During mourning the people usually took off their turban, but the

brave and the holy are neither supposed to weep, nor lament, nor take off their turban. They are to wear the turban as the symbol of stoic courage:

You are not to lament, not to weep, not to let your tears run down. Groan in silence, do not go into mourning for the dead, knot your turban round your head, put your sandals on your feet, do not cover your beard.

Ezekiel, 24:17.

And you are to do as I have done; you must not cover your beards, or eat common bread; you must keep your turbans on your heads and your sandals on your feet.

Ezekiel, 24: 22-23.

#### THE TURBAN AS SYMBOL OF DIGNITY AND SELF-RESPECT

The turban during the Biblical period, as it still is among the Indians and Arabs who wear it, was a symbol of dignity, self-respect and authority. A blemish on the turban meant a blot on one's character; so was it during the time of *Old Testament* prophets, and so it is now among the Sikhs and Arabs. An insult to the turban meant an unbearable insult to one's personality. To take away the turban meant the greatest humiliation to the person whose turban was taken away, and it was a sign of subjugating him and making him a slave. During Freedom Movement (British Period) the Sikh prisoners were forced to wear caps which they refused. "When God takes away the turban," says Prophet Isaiah, "he takes away the dignity of man:"

That day the Lord will take away the ankle ornaments, tiaras, pendants and bracelets, the veils..... the expensive dresses, mantles, cloaks and purses, the mirror, linen garments, turbans and mantillas.

Isaiah, 3: 18-23.

#### TURBAN AS SYMBOL OF YOUTH AND STRENGTH

The turbans and beards gave the Babylonians such attractive

personality that women who had not seen them were infatuated by their personality:

No sooner had she seen wall engravings of men, paintings of Chaldaeans, coloured vermilion, men with sashes round their waists and elaborate turbans on their heads, all so imperious of bearing, portraits of Babylonians from Chaldaea, than she fell in love with them at first sight and sent messengers to them in Chaldaea. Belts were round their waists and on their heads turbans with dangling ends. All seemed to be high officers and looked like Babylonians natives of Chaldaea.

Ezekiel, 23: 14-17.

#### TURBAN AS SYMBOL OF JUSTICE AND CHARITY

When Job surveys his life and protests his innocence, he recounts the good, he did during his days of prosperity. He identifies the turban with righteousness and uses it as a metaphor for justice, charity and kingly dignity:

I had dressed myself in righteousness like a garment;  
Justice, for me, was a cloak and turban.  
I was eyes for the blind,  
And feet for the lame.

Job, 29: 14-15.

#### TURBAN AS SYMBOL OF PURITY

Filthy garments were sign of slavery and humiliation. For Joshua filthy garments were sign of captivity, exile, misery, physical humiliation and harm. Filthy garments also represent sin of the people. A clean turban was symbol of purity and dignity:

Now Joshua was dressed in dirty clothes as he stood before the angel of God. The angel said these words to those who stood before him. "Take off his dirty clothes, clothe him in splendid robes of state, and put a clean turban on his head." They clothed him in splendid robes of state and put a clean turban on his head. The angel said, "I have

taken away your iniquity from you."

Zechariah, 3: 4-6.

He shall wear a sacred linen tunic and linen drawer to cover himself, and he shall put on a linen sash around his waist and wind a linen turban round his head, and these are sacred vestments and he shall bathe before putting them on.

Leviticus, 8:9.

Thus a clean body, a clean white turban were pre-requisites for spiritual development of a clean mind and pure soul.

### TURBAN IN ISLĀM

In Arabia, the pre-Muslim Bedouins are said to have worn turbans, and it has been supposed that the high cap is the Persian and cloth wound round it, the true Arabic elements of the Turban.<sup>3</sup>

In Islām, in course of time, the turban has developed a three-fold significance; one natural for the Arabs, one religious for the Muslims and one professional for civil professions, later divided into religious and administrative offices: *wazaif dīniyā wā dīwānīyā*.

Many details about Prophet Muḥammed's turban have been handed down by tradition. According to the belief recorded in later *ḥadīth*, the turban signified dignity for the believer and strength for the Arab, *Wakār li 'l-Muslim Wā- 'izz li 'l-Arab*. Prophet Muḥammed is to them, the owner of the turban par-excellence: *Sāhib al Imāma*. The makers of turbans in Turkey have actually chosen Prophet Muḥammed as their patron saint, for he is said to have traded in turbans in Syria before his *Call*, and to have exported them from Meccā to Basrā. (Ewliya i, 590). According to one *ḥadīth*, "Adam is said to have worn turban which Gabriel wound round his head on his expulsion from Paradise."

"A much quoted *ḥadīth* runs, 'turbans are the crowns of the Arabs,' which is explained to mean that Arabs wear turbans as Persians wear crowns, so that the turban would be a national badge

of the Arabs as crowns is of the Persians. A similar ḥadīth runs, "wear turbans and thus be different from earlier people." Still more numerous are the ḥadīths which describe the turban as "the badge of Muslims to distinguish them from unbelievers; the distinction between them and the believer is the turban." There is a prophecy which says, "My community will never decay so long as they wear turbans." "On the day of judgement, a man can receive light for every winding of turban (*kawai*) round his head." Thus to put on the turban means to adopt Islām. Nevertheless, the stage was never reached where it was a bounded duty (*farz*) to wear a turban; it is, however, recommended, and general recommendation runs to wear turban and increase nobility. Especially at *Ṣalāt* (ritual prayer) and on going to the mosque or tombs the wearing of the turban is recommended, and it is said, two *raka's* (or one *raka'* or the *Ṣalāt*) with a turban are better than seventy without it; for it is not proper to appear before one's king with head uncovered. It is also written that "God and angels bless him who wear a turban on Fridays."

Earlier history shows that in some places only believers were supposed to wear turbans; the unbelievers could wear caps. In earlier times unbelievers were ordered to wear turbans of different colours and with some distinguishing mark. Omar I is said to have forbidden Christians from wearing turbans or dress resembling Muslims. (Tritton, J.R.A.S., 1927). At one time Christians were forbidden to wear red turban, while at another time anyone who wore white turban was punished with death. In Egypt and Syria, in the eighth century A.H., Christians wore blue turbans, Jews yellow, and Samira red turbans. The Ottomans wore white turbans, unbelievers were allowed red, Jews and Christians could wear blue. The commonest colour among the Muslims is white turban. The prophet is said to have been fond of this colour and it is the colour of paradise. The angles who helped the believers at Badr are said to have worn white turbans. The prophet is first said to have liked the yellow colour but later forbade it.

Prophet Muḥammed is said to have worn black cloak and

black turban on entering Meccā and at the address at the gate of Kā'abā. In black, there is said to be subtle allusion to sovereignty, and besides black is the foundation of all colours. The Abbasids claimed that the black turban of the prophet worn at the entry to Meccā had been handed down to them, and in a tendentious ḥadīth in which Gabriel prophesied the coming of the Abbasids, he, of course, wears a black turban.

Prophet Muḥammed is said to have at first liked to wear blue turban but he forbade it because the unbelievers, Jews and Christians wore it. The so called *Kitrya* turban which the Prophet wore, is also said to have been of red colour. Green turban and green colour became well-known badges of the descendants of Muḥammed. Tradition is unanimous that the Prophet never wore green turban. Green turban as the badge of the *Śarīfs* is of much later origin.

Ibn al Zubair wore black turban and cloaks. Saynute wrote a whole book on the importance of black cloak and turbans. In the Sikh Scriptures, we find that the *Slokas* of Sheikh Farīd clearly indicate that the Chistī Śūfī Saints mostly wore black cloaks and turbans:

*Farīdā kāle maiḍe kapre kālā maiḍā vesū.*  
*gunhī bhariā mai phirā lokī kahai darvesū.*

Says Farīd: Black is my Śūfī garb,  
 Black is the cloak I wear;  
 Full of sin and vice is my heart,  
 Though people call me a dervish.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Farīd, *Sloka*. 61, p. 1381.

*Farīdā mai bholāvā pag dā matī mailī hoi jāi.*  
*gahilā rūhū na jānāi sirū bhī miṭī khāi.*

Says Farīd: I am always worried about my turban,  
 Lest it be soiled with dirt,  
 My foolish mind realizes not  
 My very head will be in dust.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Farīd, *Sloka*. 26, p. 1379.



The first Sloka indicates that the *Šūfī dervishes* of Chistī Order wore black cloaks and black turbans, and the second Sloka indicates that in the Puñjābī society of Sheikh Farīd's times (13th century) turban was the symbol of social status.

There was a positive discipline and regulations about the wearing of turbans among the Muslims known as *Ādāb-i-Dastār*; the following are the important rules:

(i) A boy should be given turban, when he reaches maturity at the age of 7 to 10 years.

(ii) How should the turban be wound by a Muslim? The answer is, as the Prophet did it. It should be wound standing, (while trousers are put on sitting):

(iii) A new turban should be put on Friday and the wearer should utter *Bismillā* at the time of wearing it.

(iv) Gold and silver ornaments should not be put on the turban.

The turban has acquired considerable significance as a symbol of investiture, since there is no crown or coronation proper as symbols of sovereignty in the Muslim sense as the turban is considered to be.

The prototype again is an act of Muḥammad. He is said to have put a turban on Ali's head at the pond of Khumā and again when in Ramaḍān of the year 10 A.H., he appointed him Governor of the Yemen. The Prophet is next said to have wound the turban on every Governor in order to teach him the manners and to give him the dignity. Following this example the Caliphs, the successors of the Prophet, put the turban on the *Wazīrs* and later *Sultāns*.

"The turban is also essential feature of the robe of honour (*khilat*), which Muslim rulers used to bestow upon their *Wazīrs* and *Amīrs*. In the Middle-East the Christian Patriarch also had a larger and more regularly shaped turban than the other priests. The turbans of the dead Sultān were kept in the tomb. Fesquet says that the secretaries wore high turbans with windings, merchants and artificers loose and broad, and slaves very small."

Pirzādā Muḥammad Hasan writes: "Even when the Arabs

became totally Persianized, they never relinquished their national head dress. The rulers followed the subjects and the Persian and Turkish sovereigns themselves, with few exceptions, imitated the Arabs in this respect. In place of the crown therefore, the Muḥammedan sovereigns, with rare exception, have always used a turban girdled with a jewelled band (*sarpech*) and studded with a jewelled crest. But the Muḥammedan sovereigns of India have always used golden and jewelled umbrellas (*chhattar*), which they borrowed from their adopted country.”<sup>4</sup>

### THE INDIAN TURBAN

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* states “What is known in Europe as a turban (from Persian, *Sarband*) is in India divided into two classes. The first made of a single piece of cloth 20 to 30 inches wide and from 6 to 9 yards long, is bound round the head from right to left or from left to right in differently and quite simply so as to form narrow angles over the forehead and back. This form is called *amāmh* (in Arabic) and *dastār* (in Persian). It is also called *śamlā*, *śāfā*, *luṅgī*, *selā*. The term *amāmh* and *dastār* are used chiefly with reference to turbans of priests and *Ulamās*, that is the learned and religious persons. They are usually white. Formerly, *Saiyads* wore *dastārs* of green colour.

“The *luṅgī* is made of cloth of special kind manufactured in Ludhiānā. It is generally blue and has ornamental border. The *selā* is grander and more ornamental. Generally it is worn by wealthier and noble classes. The *luṅgī* and *selā* were generally manufactured by Muslim weavers who have migrated to Pakistan after the partition of the country.

“The second form of turban is known as *pagrī* (Englishized by Anglo-Indians as *puggaree* or *pugree*), which is worn by the Sikhs and the Muslims. It is a single piece of cloth, 6 to 8 inches wide and of any length. The method of binding the *pagrī* are innumerable; each method having a distinctive name as: *arabī* (Arab fashion),

*mansabī* (official fashion), *muṣaikī* (Sheikh fashion), *Chakridār* (worn by *hājīs*); *khirkidārs* (fashion of piling the cloth high adopted by retainers of great men); *laṭūdār* (top shaped) worn by *kayaśth* or *munśīs*: scribes), *joridār* (cloth twisted into rope shape); *sipralī* (shield shape worn by Shīā sect), *murrassā* or *mastalikh* (ornately bound), *laṭāpaṭī* (carelessly bound). The *chīrā* is a pagrī of checked cloth. It is worn by nobles and persons of distinction.”<sup>5</sup>

The eminent linguist and philosopher, Professor Sunīti Kumār Chatterjee, National Professor of India in Humanities, in his scholarly work *Angla-Nibandha Chayana: Select Papers* writes: “The basic head dress of the Indians is the turban which is a piece of cloth of varying length, wound round the head in different styles. Ancient Indian turbans, as in sculptures and paintings, were sometimes quite elaborate. A very popular type which we find in the oldest Indian sculptures as in Barhut and Sāñchī and in the earliest Ajantā paintings has a round knob in front. Various turban designs are found in ancient and medieval Indian art. Professor Hermann Goetz, the eminent German Indologist and historian has shown how the Mughal court was largely based on the earlier Rājput court dress, and the Mughal turban, which we find on the heads of the Mughal emperors in paintings, is definitely of Indian origin. This Mughal style turban is going out of use, and in a modified form, is survived in the head dress of the princes of the ruling families of Hyderābād state.

“The Bengālī turban we still see in pictures—it was rather voluminous and was something like a big wheel round the head. A representative of it we find in pictures of Rājā Rām Mohan Roy, and in the traditional figures of god Kārtikeya or Skanda in Durgā image groups. This was simplified to a made up cap-turban which professional men, lawyers and doctors—during the later part of the last century used to wear.

“The Marāṭhā turban was of various sorts, a very heavy one which we see in pictures of Marāṭhā army under the *Peśwās*, and the small elegant turban generally made of vivid red silk with a

splash of gold embroidery at the top. But now alas ! this has degenerated into a made up turban cap. The South Indian turban is a simple affair generally white in colour, small in shape with a splash of gold embroidery from one end to the other above the brow.

"The *Paṭhān* turban is elegant affair; it is rather slight in its form, lightly wound round a tall conical embroidered cap either red or green or some other colour, with a scarf end floating like a feather at the top. But the most popular form of turban latterly among the aristocracy all over India was the *Rājput sālā*. This was of very vivid colours like the Sikh turban, generally fine muslin, dyed in Jaipur or Bikaner in various colours and gracefully tied round the head with one ear covered with a fringe shown at the top.

"There is a *Mārwarī Banā* or merchant turban (which also used to be worn by the *Rājputs* in early days), which consists of very fine and long string of cloth, generally yellow or saffron in colour, wound in many folds above the head, and looking like an elaborate skull cap. There were various types of other turbans which have gradually given place to caps imitating them, e.g. *Pārsī* turban and the turban (generally white) resembling the *Mahārāshṭrīan* and the *Mārwarī*, which is worn by *Mathial Brāhmīns* (now made into a cap-turban). Similarly the *Bohrā* and other Muslim communities of the western India wear a kind of round made up cap-turban, covered with gold lace. There are various terms in different parts of India for these types of turbans, e.g. *pay*, *pagrrī*, *birā*, *murethā* (Sanskrit: *mundā-vestā*: that which is worn round the head.), and there are names in the *Drāvaṇian* languages as well."<sup>6</sup>

The turban of the Sikhs is not merely a head dress. It is inseparably connected with Sikh Baptism and the Sikh Code of Conduct (*Rehit*). In Sikh history, the types of turbans have been changing, but the fundamental principles governing the wearing of the turban have never changed. We find the *Paṭhān* type of turban worn by Gurū Nānak in the oldest and historically correct painting of the Gurū, now preserved in Bābā Rām Rāi's *ḍerā*, Dehrādūn. From the time of fifth Gurū, the *Rājput* style which was

adopted by the Mughal courts, was adopted. During the *Misal* period, the Afghan style in a modified form became popular among the Sikh Chiefs, while saints and seers went on wearing the Rājput style or the Šūfī style with certain modifications. The *Nihāṅgs* (warrior groups) have developed their distinct style which is slightly changed form of the medieval Sikh style.

While there are no hard and fast rules about wearing the Sikh turban, even in the different modern styles developed by the romantic vagaries of young men, all Sikhs observe certain rules and principles that the head should be completely and gracefully covered. The turban should reflect smartness, grace and dignity, and that it should never be treated as a cap-turban. White, blue, yellow are the most popular colours among the religious people, while all other shades matching their suits are worn by young men according to their tastes. We shall discuss separately the fundamental relation of the turban to Sikh baptism in a separate chapter.

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*Special Note:* All quotations from the Bible are from: (i) *The New English Bible*, Translation prepared under the direction of 12 Churches and published by Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press in 1970; and (ii) *The Jerusalem Bible*, Darton, Longman and Todd London, 1968.

## CHAPTER 3

### HERITAGE OF THE SWORD

For the Lord accepts the service of the people,  
He crowns his humble folk with victory.  
Let His faithful servant exult in triumph,  
Let him shout for joy as they kneel before Him.  
Let the high praises of God be on their lips,  
And Two-Edged Sword in their hands.

*Old Testament, Psalms, 149:3-6.*

The generic term for the sword in Europe appears to be common. The various names are: Scandanavian: *sward*, Icelandic: *sverd*; Danish: *svaerd*, Anglo-Saxon: *sweard* and *suerd*, Old German: *svert*, now *schwert*, Old English and Scotch: *swerd*, now sword. In Egyptian *Sf, Safi, Sayf, Sfet*, and *Emself*. *Saif* is the common word for sword in Persian and Puñjābī. The word scimitar is derived from the Persian word *Shamshīr*, a very common word in Puñjābī language.

"The history of the sword," says Richard Burton, "is the history of humanity. The white Arm means more than the oldest, the most varied of weapons, the only one which has lived through all times. He, she, it—for gender of the sword varies, has been worshipped with priestly sacrifice as a present god."<sup>1</sup>

"At a higher plane, the sword has been idealized as divine power. At a lower plane, the sword became the favourite arm of gods and demigods; a gift of magic and one of the treasures sent down from heaven, which made Malik Kabīr, the great king divine. It was consecrated to the deities and was stored in the temples and the Church. It was the key to heaven and hell, and the saying is that, 'If there were no sword, there would be no law of

Muḥammed,' and a Muslim warriors highest title was *Saifu' llāh*: the Sword of Allāh. Prophet Muḥammed says, 'Permission has been given to them who fight, because they have been wronged and verily God to help them has the might. They are those who have been driven out of their homes unjustly only because they affirmed—Our Lord is Allāh. If Allāh did not repel the aggression of some people by means of others, cloisters and churches, synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allāh is oft commemorated, would be destroyed. Allāh will surely help him who helps His cause.' (*Kor'ān*, 22-40). One *ḥadīth* says, "If men did not fight for protection of churches and faith, places of worship would be destroyed."<sup>2</sup>

In human history the sword became an abstraction as well as Personage endowed with human as well as superhuman qualities. The sword became a sentient being, a divine deity. It is even identified with the Word of God:

For the Word of God is alive and active. It cuts more keenly than any two-edged sword, piercing as far as the place where life and spirit, joint and marrow divides. It sifts the purposes and thoughts of the hearts. There is nothing in creation that can hide from Him; everything is naked and exposed to the eye of the One with whom we have to reckon.

Hebrews, 4:12-13.

There is a metaphorical use of the sword when in the Revelation it is said, "And out of his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword and his face shone like the sun in full strength." Commenting on this Swedenborg says, "By Sword nothing else is signified but truth fighting against falsehood and destroying it. The sword is here, a symbol of judicial authority:"

For Sword take that which the spirit justifies, the Words that come from God.

Ephesians, 6:17.

You must not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth, I have not come to bring peace but a Sword.

Mathew, 10:34-35.

Jeremiah, the prophet of God, then stretched out his right hand and presented Judas with a golden sword saying as he gave it, "Take this holy sword as a gift from God; with it you shall strike down the enemies."

Maccabees, 15:15-16.

For my Sword has drunk deep in the heavens. See how it slashes through Edom, through the people I have condemned to be punished.

Isaiah, 34:5.

Bishop Phillip Brooks in one of his sermons, *The Sword Bathed in Heaven*, comments on the sayings from the *Bible* and says: "The good moves against the evil, and must in the end, destroy it. It is vehement, impetuous and fiery in movement, but it is abstract..... God is about to smite the wickedness of the earth. His sword is in His hand. And then, as a part of the terrible announcement, there comes these words: 'My sword shall be bathed in Heaven....' It means that the instruments of righteousness upon the earth must be the same with the means and instruments of righteousness in heavens.

"In no part of His universe can God be passive. Everywhere He must be the foe of the evil and the friend of the good. Everywhere therefore throughout the great perplexed tumultuous universe, we can see the flashing of His Sword. "His Sword"! we may say, and that must mean His nature uttering itself in His own form of force. Nothing can be in His Sword which is not in His nature. And so the Sword of God in heavenly regions must mean perfect thoroughness and perfect justice contending against evil and self will, and bringing about everywhere the ultimate victory of righteousness and Truth..... God could not and would not fight



otherwise than as God; and there would be no mere favouritism, nor any tolerance of means or methods, which were undivine. That every struggle of the people of God against evil in this world must be fired with eternal principles, must be instinct with thoroughness and with justice; that is the plain prosaic meaning of the word of God to Isaiah which declared, 'My Sword shall be bathed in heaven.....' "It is the truth that all the true battles of the earth really are God's battles..... To strike for absolute truth, to tolerate no falsehood, however useful for the time it seems, that is not possible unless the man counts his fight God's fight and despises any method which it is not worthy of God."<sup>3</sup>

"To surrender the sword was submission, to break the sword was degradation, to kiss the sword was, and in places still is, the highest form of oath and homage. The sword killed and cured; the hero when helpless fell upon his sword; and the heroines like Lucretia and Calpurnia used the blade standing. The sword cut the gordian knot of every difficulty. The sword was the symbol of justice and of martyrdom and accompanied the wearer to the grave. "Lay on may coffin a sword," said the German poet Henrich Hein, "for I have warred daughtily to win freedom for mankind."<sup>4</sup>

"From days immemorial the sword is the Queen of weapons, a creator as well as destroyer, carved out history, formed the nations and shaped the world. She decided the Alexanderine and Caesarian victories which opened new prospects to human ken. She diffused everywhere the bright light and splendid benefits of war and conquest, whose functions are all important in the formative and progressive process. The sword was carried by and before the Kings and the bands, not the sceptre, noted as their seals of state. As the firm friend of the crown and the ermic robe, it became the second fountain of honour. Among the ancient Germans, even the judges sat armed on the judgement seat, and at the marriages it represented the bridegroom in absence. Noble and ennobling its touch upon the shoulder conferred the prize of knighthood. Its presence was a moral lesson. Unlike the Greeks,

the Romans and the Hebrews, western and southern Europe, during its chivalrous ages, appeared nowhere and on no occasion without the sword. It was ever ready to leap from its sheath in the cause of weakness and the call of honour. Hence with its arrogant individuality, the sword still remained the all sufficient type and token of high sentiments and the higher tendencies of human nature.

“In society the position of the sword was remarkable. Its aspect was brilliant, its manner was courtly, its habits were punctilious, and its connections were patricians. It bore itself as haughty victor, an arbitrator and necessarily there were times when its superlative qualities showed corresponding defects. Handled by the vile, it too often became in the “syllogism of violence,” an incubus, a blusterer, a bully, a tyrant, a murderer, an assassin; under such conditions it was corruption at its best. But its lapses were individual and transient, its benefits to humanity general and enduring.”<sup>5</sup>

In ancient Hindu period of Indian history, four types of weapons were recognized:

- (i) *Yantra-mukta* : thrown by the machine.
- (ii) *Pānnī-mukta* : thrown by the hand.
- (iii) *Mukta-sandharita* : thrown and drawn back.
- (iv) *Mañtra-mukta* : thrown by magic spell.

Out of these four classes the sword belongs to the second category and is known in classical Sanskrit literature as *Kharag*, *As*, or *Asi*, the names repeatedly used by Gurū Gobind Singh in his writings besides the Persian names like *Tegh*, *Saif*, *Samshūr*, *Talwār*. The *Kharag* has total of nine names; it is carried on the left side and handled in thirty-two ways. A section of the Sanskrit classic, *Nītiprakāśa* (Book III) is entirely devoted to *Kharag*. Among the four arts to be studied besides *Kāma Śāstra* ‘Arts Amoris’ women are enjoined by Sage Vātsyā (Part I, p. 26) to practice with the sword, single stick, quarter staff, bow and arrow. Among the types quite popular were *Asidhenu* (Sister of sword-dagger) and *Mustika* (fist

sword). The Roman *Ensis* is generally classified with the Sanskrit *Asi*, and the Zend *Anh*.<sup>6</sup>

He who understands the foregoing historical exposition of the sword can truly appreciate the sword of the Sikhs. To the Sikhs, this sword embodies "the Religion of Honour" the first step to the "Religion of Humanity." In the Knightly hands of the Khālsā, the sword acknowledged no Fate but that of freedom and the free-will, and it bred the very spirit of Chivalry, a keen personal sentiment of self-respect, of dignity and of loyalty, with the noble desire to protect weakness against the abuse of strength. The Knightly sword of the Khālsā was ever representative of universal experience and idea. It is the eternal symbol of wisdom that destroys darkness and annihilates fears and threats of dark powers. It is the symbol of courage which inspired freedom and uprightness. It does not acknowledge any social, political and cultural bondage. The sword for the Sikhs is, "the best friend in defence of his freedom and the most reliable saviour of faith and truth. It is the symbol of human freedom and political and spiritual rights without which a Sikh considers humiliating to live. It is the outward symbol of the spirit of martyrdom and unshakable determination to live and die for truth and justice, and fight all oppression and tyranny." We shall discuss all aspects of the Sword of Gurū Gobind Singh in a separate chapter, giving in detail the social, political and cultural philosophy of the sword, which has become inseparable from the personality and religious life of the Sikhs.

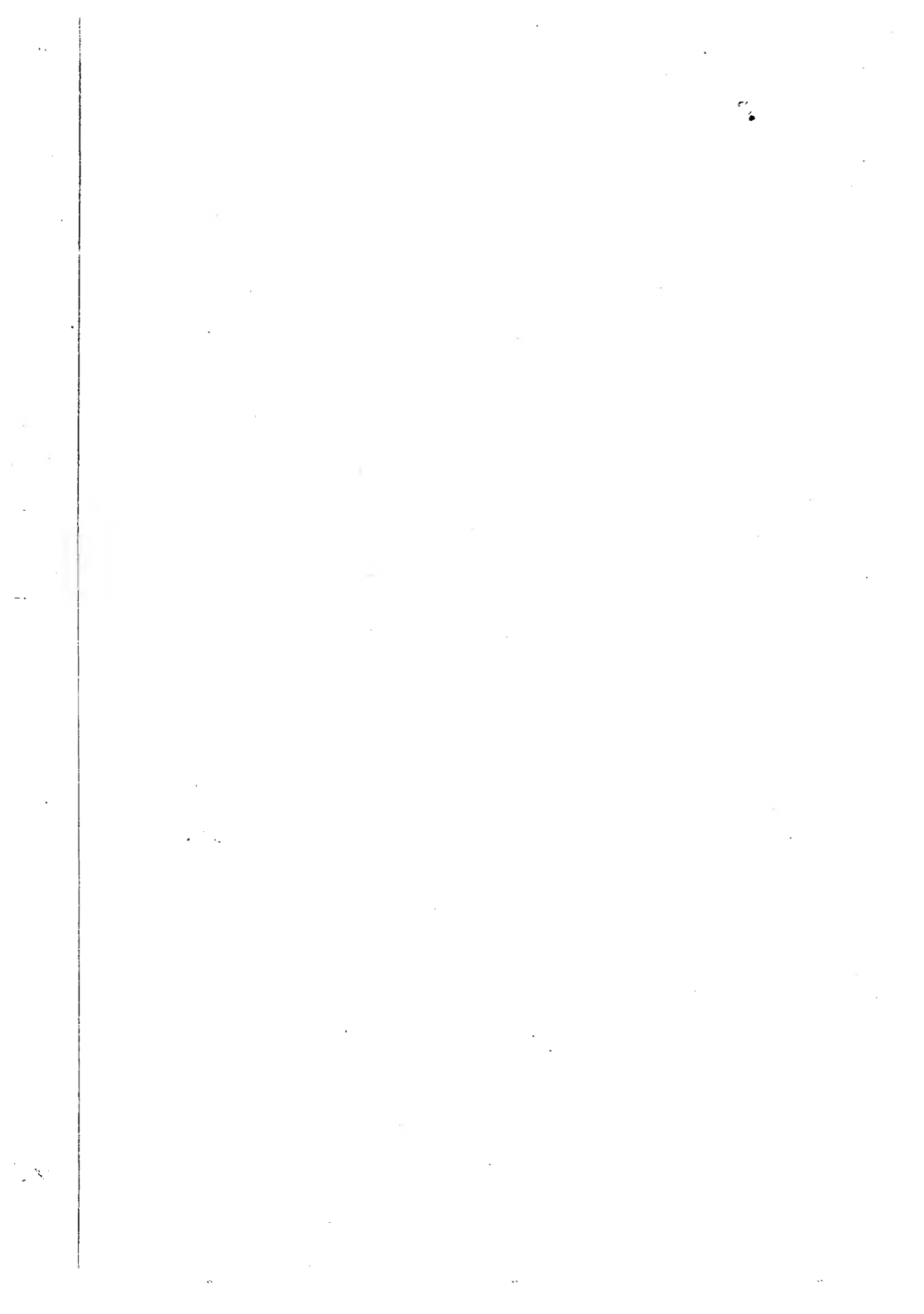
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2. *Ibid.*, p. xii.
3. Bishop Phillip Brooks, *The Sword Bathed in Heaven: Sermons*. xv, pp. 262, 264, 271.
4. Richard Burton, *The Book of The Sword*, p. xiii.
5. *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

6. (i) Gustav Oppert, *Weapons of Ancient Hindus*, p. 43.  
(ii) In *Dasam Granth*, following types of weapons have been mentioned:  
(i) *Astar*, which can be thrown upon the enemy.  
(ii) *Agnī Astar*, which operates with fire.  
(iii) *Shastra*, which are used by the hand.  
(iv) *Muktā Mukat*, which can be used by hand as well as by throwing upon the enemy.  
(v) *Mañtra Mukat*, thrown by magic spell.  
(vi) *Yantra Mukat*, thrown by the machine.

SPECIAL NOTE : All quotations from the Holy Bible are from:

- (i) *The New English Bible* Translation, prepared under the direction of 12 Churches and published by Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press in 1970.  
(ii) *The Jerusalem Bible*, Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1966.



## *Part Two*

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*History, Philosophy and Ceremony of  
Administering Sikh Baptism.*

If you yearn to play the game of love,  
Carry your head on the palm of your hand,  
Then enter the path of my Faith,  
If on this path you tread,  
Hesitate not to sacrifice your head.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Nānak, Sloka Vadhik, p. 1412.*

A scholarly seeker must seek  
Initiation: *dikhiyā*, from the *Satgurū*.  
He should offer his head  
At the feet of the *Satgurū*.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Amār Dās, Rāga Malār, p. 1261.*

According to the Will of God,  
The true Gurū ordained the Khālsā.  
By creating the Khālsā Holy Order,  
He eliminated the Masañds.  
Contemplate the Name of God  
Be free from all bondage;  
Be a Khālsā of the Gurū,  
And turn your back on Masañds.

*Kavī Saināpati, Gursobhā Granth, 5:32-148, 46-162.*

## CHAPTER 4

# SIKH SACRAMENTS FOOD FOR BODY, MIND AND SOUL

*jau tau prem khelan kã chãu.*

*sirũ dharĩ talĩ galĩ merĩ ãu.*

If you yearn to play the game of Love,

Carry your head on the palm of your hand.

Then, enter the path of my Faith;

If on this path you tread,

Hesitate not to sacrifice your head.

*Ādi Gurũ Granth, Gurũ Nānak, Sloka Vadhik, 20, p. 1412.*

"A sacrament is a significant deed, a particular use of temporal things which gives to them the value of eternal things and thus conveys spiritual reality. The sacraments in higher religions belong to the order of signs and symbols. They manifest something more than themselves, something hidden. Indeed, a sacrament is at once something visible and something hidden. The Latin word *sacramentum* is the normal translation of the Greek, *mysterion* or mystery. In every sacrament there is a sign of grace made in the soul, a fulfilment in the seeker's path to spiritual progress."<sup>1</sup> "A sacrament is a symbol of binding compact within the sanctuary of the soul; a covenant between the inner Divine soul and the outer advanced qualities, whereby they may be consciously raised to higher efficiency and purity."<sup>2</sup>

"The sacraments are so interiorly and spiritually bound up with faith that this world of symbols and symbolical actions is apt to remain a mystery to the unbeliever. The sacraments can only be given to the believers, and it is through the sacraments that faith



grows to full maturity. What is important in the structure of the sacraments is primarily the value that is attached to the sign or the symbol. Signs and symbols are very important to human life. They are continually to be met with in all our mutual relationships. A letter will reveal to us the working of a friend's mind; a handshake expresses affection; a kiss, a deep love. A wave of the hand can overwhelm us with joy. From morning to night, signs and symbols interpret for us the most precious content of our earthly possessions: acts, gestures, words show what has grown and ripened in the living heart of man. It is, then to be wondered at that God in the supernatural life should also come to us by means of sacramental signs and tokens. That He gives a visible form to His love which shares with us its gifts. There, in this way, He makes His gifts of grace intelligible to us. Each sacrament points out to us a special grace; taken together, they light up for us all possibilities of our deification and the wonderful process of man's elevation to grace and glory."<sup>3</sup>

"The bread in the hands of Jesus becomes his 'body' and the wine in the cup, which he holds, becomes spiritual Elixir, powerful enough to remove sins. The bread is the bread of heaven, the Spirit of Truth and Goodness. The 'wine' is his 'blood', his resplendent Spirit. The 'cup' and 'wine' signify respectively the soul and life—the psychic receptacle for the Spirit and the vivifying Spirit itself. Through such sacramental grace the soul becomes conscious of its destiny and yearns for instructions in Truth, that it may progress the faster."<sup>4</sup>

"Action and contemplation must act upon each other, otherwise our actions will have no soul and our thoughts no body. This is the great Truth which the higher religions express in their sacraments. A sacrament is more than a symbol. The perceptions of the symbols lead us from the many to the One, from the transitory to the permanent, but not from appearance to reality. This belongs to the sacramental experience which is symbolism, retranslating itself into concrete action and to mundane interest."<sup>5</sup>

In the religious symbols of sacraments it is not the symbols that are venerated, but that which is revealed through them. Religious symbols always function within a living texture. Symbolism of sacraments can be understood only in the context of their theological and mystical interpretation. Gurū Nānak, the founder of Sikh Religion, made four sacraments the rock foundation of Sikh Religion:

- (i) *Karāh Praśād*: Sanctified *Halwā*, distributed in the Sikh temples after prayers.
- (ii) *Laṅgar*: *Degh*: Open Community Kitchen, attached to the Prayer House.
- (iii) *Śabad kā Laṅgar*: The Divine Word as Sacred Spiritual Food.
- (iv) *Charan Pāhul Amrit*: Baptism from Gurū Nānak to Gurū Gobīnd Singh upto 1699 A.D.
- (v) *Khaṇḍe kā Amrit*: Baptism with the Double-Edged Sword, organized by Gurū Gobīnd Singh in 1699 A.D. to replace the earlier Baptism by Charan Pāhul.

Sikh Sacraments, other than Baptism, are a part of daily worship and congregational acts of piety, prayer and charity. The devotee seeks the Eternal in the temporal through active involvement in these sacraments, which help him in his spiritual search and develop in him noble qualities of charity, humility and reverence for humanity at large. While baptism as a sacrament is open only to the initiate and the genuine seekers, who are prepared to take vows of commitments, the other sacraments are open for participation to all men of all faiths, all races and nations. The Sikh sacraments have been so woven into the fabric of their life of worship and prayer that they have become a part of their character and daily moral life. The dangers of formalism and exteriorization are always there, and as money is involved in sacramental offerings, the greedy and selfish people may slide down into crass materialism and use the Sikh shrines as means of material gains, as is being done in many places these days. But for

the serious seeker and the pious devotee these sacraments are full of deep mystery and meaning, helping him to reach the supersensible through the sensible. It is only morally and spiritually blind people who ignore these patent facts and fail to see deeper bonds between matter and spirit, between the seen and the unseen and between nature and grace. God has created some of the fundamental physical and mental foods without which no human being can live as a moral and spiritual being, and in true worship these fundamental elements of physical and moral life become vehicles of spiritual experiences. The ultimate aim of these sacraments is to inculcate charity, fellowship and fraternal associations amongst human beings, and make the love and worship of God a daily and living practice.

#### SACRAMENT OF *KARĀH-PRASĀD*: SANCTIFIED *HALWĀ*

The word *Prasād* means the gift of the Gurū's grace. The sacrament offering which is offered in the Sikh temples by the devotees and distributed after the congregational prayer among all present in the congregation, irrespective of their nationality, creed, caste or colour, is known as *karāh prasād*, the literal meaning of which is sacramental super-substantial food prepared in an iron cauldron: *karāhā*. It was, as Bhāi Gurdās tells us, originally known as *Mahāprasād*, the supreme super-substantial sacramental offering "*āṁī mahā parśādī vāṇḍī khruāiā*: The disciple brought *mahāprasād* and distributed it as a sacrament."<sup>6</sup> "*Ek miṣṭān pān lāvat mahāprasād*: Some bring the sweet sacramental offering of *mahāprasād*."<sup>7</sup> Bhāi Gurdās also calls it *Pañch-Amrit*: Ambrosial and sacred food with five ingredients. The five ingredients are: water, flour, clarified butter (*ghee*), sugar and fire.<sup>8</sup> It is the recitation of the holy hymns and the congregational prayer of offering in the Presence of *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib*, which makes it ambrosial (*amrit*), otherwise it remains the common *halwā*. These are the ingredients of the best that is in human food all over the civilized world, and people of no nationality or creed can ever

have any objection to it when it is offered to them in the temple. To these five constituents is added the essential spiritual ingredient, which consists of the prayer (*Japujī*) which is read while it is being prepared, and the congregational prayer in which the last words are, "May he who eats the *praśād* (the sacramental offerings) O Gurū, go contented and blessed by Thee."<sup>9</sup> This sacrament replaces all animal and other priestly sacrificial offerings of various religions; Hindu and Semitic.

The *kaṛāh praśād* is not offered to all present in the congregation to appease their physical hunger. As it is to be equally distributed to all, the quantity offered is generally very small. It is symbolic offering, first from the devotee to the Gurū, and then from the Gurū to all the devotees present in the congregation. It has two fold meaning. To the devotee the symbolic meaning is that a Sikh must offer at least some small part of his earnings to the Gurū for charity and service of humanity. As even half a pound of *praśād* worth a Rupee and half (10 cents) offered by the devotee reaches many people in small quantity. It is symbolic of the fact that true charity is to offer whatever we can for the service of others without expecting anything in return from them and without even knowing who are the people served by such an offering.

Its symbolic meaning from the point of view of the Gurū, in whose name it is offered; is different. The Sikh Scriptures and historical traditions are full of the theme that the heart of the humble and poor man is the heaven of the Gurū spirit. What is offered to the poor and the destitute to lessen their suffering, reaches the Gurū and God; the indwelling spirit of humanity and God present in His Creatures. Bhāī Chaupā Singh in his *Rehīt-nāmā* says, "*Gurū kī Sikh garīb kī rasnā ko Gurū kī golak jānai*: A Sikh should consider the mouth of a poor man to be treasure chest of the Gurū." Whoever clothes and feeds the poor and helps to share his earning with the needy, is blessed by the Lord. On him descends the grace and blessings of God. Thus the *kaṛāh praśād*

is symbolic of the devotee's love and obedience to all ideals, the Gurū stands for, the Lord's grace on all human beings.

### FOOD FOR BODY, MIND AND SOUL

The community kitchen in the medieval Šūfī *khānaqāh* has been known as *laṅgar*. The word *laṅgar* in Persian means (i) an anchor: a stay or rope for the tent; (ii) the house or monastery of the Šūfī *Dervishes*; (iii) an alms-house. The Sikh Gurūs established this institution as a major part of the Sikh temples, and it became a very important sacrament of the Sikh Church. It has the inner process of germination of the spirit of Sikh charity and spirituality, and it is on the efficiency of such institutions that the progress of the Sikh Church has always depended. There are two types of *laṅgars* in all well-established Sikh temples all over the world.

#### OPEN COMMUNITY KITCHEN

#### OR ALMS-HOUSE LAṅGAR: *DEGH*

All well-established Sikh temples offer two square meals to pilgrims, visitors, travellers, and the poor who can afford to have food in destitution. When President Nasser of Egypt visited the Golden Temple (Harimāndir Sāhib) he was so deeply impressed by the unique sight of the Kashmīrī Muslims, Tībetāns, Hindus, the rich in their gaudy dresses and the poor in their tattered clothes, sitting as equals in the *Laṅgar Hall* of the Golden Temple, that he and his party left all money they carried as donation for the Open Kitchen (*Laṅgar Gurū Rāmdās* in the Golden Temple). It is an unforgivable sin for a Sikh to question a man's faith, status, creed or nationality in the *Laṅgar*. It is open to all human beings of all countries and of all faiths. Anyone can come and sit there in the row by turn and eat to his fill. If the management running the *Laṅgar* does not fulfil this purpose, or indulges in any type of discrimination, or if anyone makes any profit from this institution, or misuses the money that comes for *Laṅgar*, he is open to serious punishment by the *Saṅgat* (congregation) and will

undoubtedly face the wrath and curse of God. It is an unpardonable sin to misappropriate any money out of the funds of Laṅgar or Kaṛāh Praśād, or any donation given for the service of the Gurū and humanity.

In the *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib*, the Bards, Rāi Balwaṇḍ and Sattā, record how Gurū Aṅgad's wife, Khivī, distributed food in Laṅgar with her own hands, and how she took care to see that the food was properly prepared and delicious milk pudding mixed with clarified butter was distributed by her in the Laṅgar; a delicacy which the poor man could not afford. She personally supervised the Laṅgar.<sup>10</sup> It is also recorded in Bhāi Manī Singh's *Sikhān dī Bhagatmālā* that the food taken by Gurū Aṅgad was much simpler than this.<sup>11</sup>

Even when individual devout Sikhs are asked for food, shelter or any help in the name of Gurū Nānak-Gurū Gobiṇḍ Singh, they dare not say no. Bhāi Desā Singh in his *Rehitnāma* says, "A Sikh who is well-to-do must look to the needs of a poor neighbour. Whenever he meets a traveller or a pilgrim from a foreign country, he must serve him devotedly."<sup>12</sup>

#### THE WORD: ŚABAD KĀ LAṅGAR AS SACRAMENTAL FOOD

Equally important is the spiritual food, which must be imparted to all who come to the temple for participation in worship and prayer, not only through any liturgical prayer; but through spiritually elevating inspirational readings and interpretations and singing of the Word of the Gurū: Hymns of *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib*. There are innumerable references in the Sikh Scriptures and history on *Śabad kā Laṅgar*: The Word as Spiritual Food, but the most conspicuous is one mentioned by Rāi Balwaṇḍ and Sattā, the Bards of Gurū Aṅgad: "*Laṅgar chalai Gur Sabadī, harī toḥī na āvī khaṭīai* : The Sacramental food of the divine Word (*Gurśabad*) is being ceaselessly distributed; it is open for distribution all day and yet the stores are full."<sup>13</sup> The three methods adopted in the distribution of this Śabad kā Laṅgar are:

ORGANIZED *KIRTAN*

*Kīrtan* means to sing the praise and glory of God. All the hymns in *Ādi Gurū Granth* are strung to musical modes by the Gurūs and the Bhaktās. The *Rāgas* indicate in which musical mode, and at what time they are to be sung. Singing of the hymns from the Holy Scriptures can be done by laymen or by professional singers. In the Harimandir no lecture or sermon or discourse and discussion is allowed in the inner precincts of the sanctum sanctorum. The singing of hymns must continue from 4 a.m. to 10.30 p.m. This is the undiminishing spiritual food which the pilgrims get when they visit the Golden Temple. This is also the practice in many other historical Sikh shrines, where all fundamental traditions are maintained.

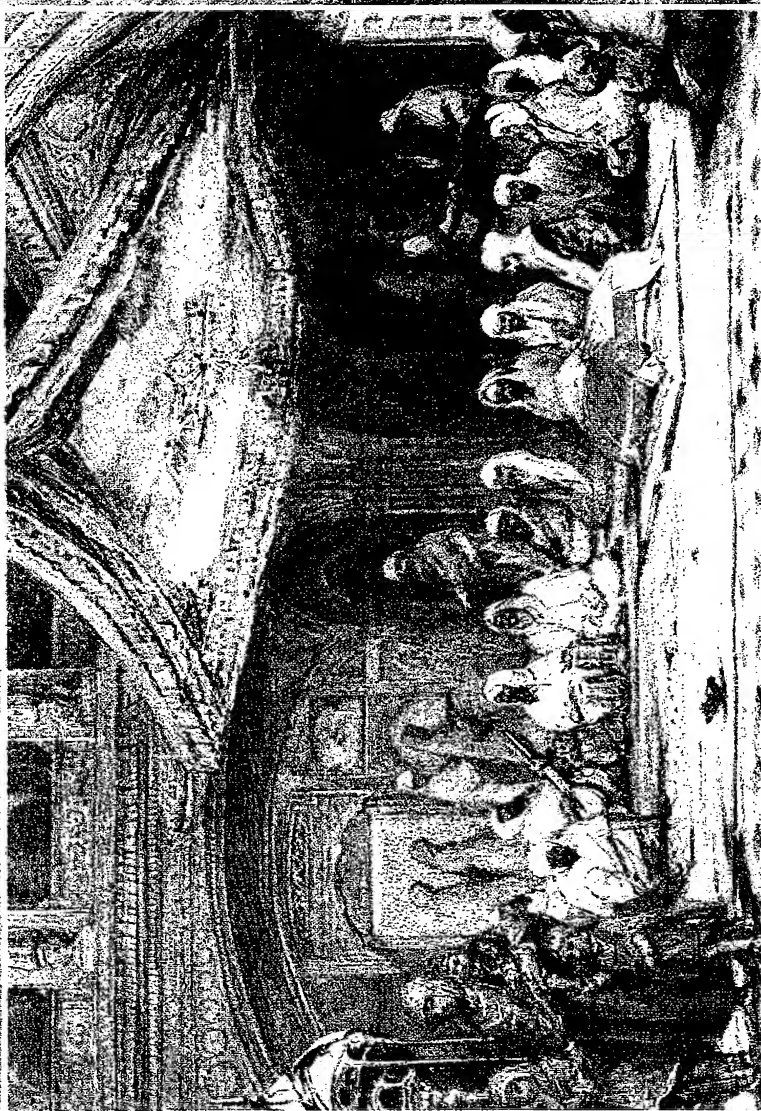
The devotees who come to listen to the divine hymns of the Gurūs, which give their thirsting and hungry souls sustenance and spiritual food of rare order. It inspires them and illumines them. Professional performers of *Kīrtan*, no doubt, have tended to corrupt this sacred institution, but the responsibility for corrupting them or dissuading them from corruption lies with the organizers who employ them and with the performers of *Kīrtan*. Listening to this divine music is as efficacious as performing it, if of course, one listens to it with a meditative attention.

## INTERPRETATION OF SIKH SCRIPTURES

AND HISTORY: *KATHĀ*

The interpretation of Sikh Scriptures can be done only by seasoned scholars and theologians who have acquired a good knowledge of theology, history and philosophy of the scriptures. Generally one hymn is taken up for interpretation and the whole *Kathā* (Sermons based on sacred writings and history) is delivered in the form of interpretation, illustrated by facts of history and scriptural references.

Gurū Hargobind, the sixth Gurū, once said that a theologian having 14 qualities was alone competent to interpret the Sikh



Interior of the Temple of the Sun, at Puma Picchu, Peru.





Scriptures. The major qualities which an interpreter should have are:

- (i) Ability to understand the letter and spirit of the scriptures.
- (ii) Ability to recite the hymn correctly in the same mood and musical mode in which it was desired by the Gurūs.
- (iii) The Interpreter must be knowledgeable theologian, and known for his devotion, knowledge and love for truth.
- (iv) He must have ability to dispel the doubts and the misunderstandings of the listeners, and should be able to answer serious and sincere questioners.
- (v) He must be able to correctly relate history and tradition with the hymns and scriptural texts, while interpreting.
- (vi) He must have a thorough knowledge of all religious traditions: *sabhnā śāstrān kā giātā hovai*.
- (vii) His speech and delivery of sermons should be impressive and moving.
- (viii) He should be humble and limit his needs and requirements to the minimum.
- (ix) He should be able to judge correctly the response of his listeners and emphasize on the same theme that interests them, and swiftly change the theme where people show lack of interest.
- (x) He should accept what is offered to him by the congregation as remuneration like a contented person.<sup>14</sup>

The tradition of inspired Kathā was very well maintained until recent times by traditionally trained scholars. But at present there is a tendency among educated Sikhs, mostly retired people from civil services, to read some published *Tikkās*, (annotation of *Ādi Gurū Granth*) and become *Kathā-vāchak* (Interpreter of Scriptures) overnight, and in many temples where they get time to deliver sermons, they speak more nonsense than sense.

## SACRAMENT OF THE WRITTEN WORD

Gurū Gobīnd Singh employed hundreds of poets, scholars and scribes to produce monumental works of history, philosophy, theology and translations from classical works of Sanskrit and Persian. He personally explained and interpreted the scriptures to about 48 scholars and theologians and sent them to various seats of learning. The *Nirmalā* school of Benāras is well-known. Bhāi Manī Singh was sent to Amritsar in 1700 A.D. with five prominent and dedicated Sikhs to establish a Centre of Theological Studies, and there he prepared copies of *Ādi Gurū Granth* and *Dasam Granth*, and also wrote historical works, of which his *Janam Sākhī* is extant. He inspired the writing of Biographies (*Gurbilāses*) of other Gurūs. Bābā Dīp Singh established a similar centre at Damdamā, Sābo kī Talwaṇḍī and Bābā Binod Singh established centres of Khaḍūr and Goīndwāl. These Seminaries became the most important centres of Missionary activities and creative work, and all the great heroes of 18th century owed their disciplined life and character to these centres.

These traditional centres of Sikh studies suffered a serious setback during the time of Mahārājā Ranjit Singh, but Sikh studies continued to be seriously taken up by many saint scholars in their own *ḍerās*. We find a wealth of theological and historical literature in these *ḍerās*. Our present leadership with crores of rupees, budgeted for religious work, consumes most of the money for politics and personal aggrandisement, and theological and historical studies have virtually been destroyed by them. Our Universities dominated by intellectuals posted through political favouritism, have, as yet, not produced a single work of high merit either in the field of theology or history and philosophy, which might have caught the imagination or attention of scholars in the international field.

History has repeatedly taught the Sikhs that whenever they have neglected creative dissemination of the moral and spiritual teachings, (*Śabad kī Laṅgar*) they have caused damage to their own

national character and dignity and their very existence. Such is the moral and spiritual crisis, the Sikh people face even today. These sacraments are the pillars of Sikhism. Whenever corruption and malpractices creep into them, the whole institutional structure of this faith becomes sick and decadence creeps in. We are passing through such a phase, but awareness of the possible dangers of this trend is also becoming acute, and the educated Sikh youth and the uncommitted intelligentsia in India and abroad is consciously aspiring to fight the naked corruption and the colossal misuse of the Sikh Temple funds, and there is a strong zeal to do something positive for the dissemination of Sikh thought and enlightened literature.

#### INITIATORY CEREMONIES IN VARIOUS RELIGIONS

There is hardly any higher religion which does not have its Initiatory ceremony or rites of baptism of its own. When people who are not conversant with the basic traditions of Oriental religions, examine Sikh baptism as an isolated phenomenon, every phase in it appears to be an enigma to the superficial observer. No religion in India upto the time of Gurū Nānak had water or the sword as the medium of baptism. No Initiatory ceremony in India ever envisaged the break through of caste, colour, racial barrier, elimination of monastic orders and priestly class, and the complete equality of men and women. We shall give a very brief resume of the various Initiatory ceremonies, based on authentic and authoritative documents of those faiths, in the context of which it will be easy for serious scholars of religion and mysticism to appreciate the symbolism and ethical content of Sikh baptism. Westerners who claim to have read many books on these religions do not know the basic structures of these Initiatory rites.

#### INITIATORY RITES IN JUDAISM

In the Semitic world, the Initiatory rites of Judaism have formed the basis of baptism and conversion rites in other Semitic faiths

like Christianity and Islām. In Judaism, baptism (immersion in water or ablution), sacrifice and circumcision remained the three essentials for a proselyte to accept Judaism. Sacrifice was bloodless, and in later stages took the form of expiatory offerings. Circumcision was much more important. Baptism was a religious ablution, signifying purification and later took the form of complete immersion (*tabilash*). "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean" (*Ezek*, xxx,vi 25).<sup>15</sup> "He that is eight days old among you, shall be circumcised" (*Genesis*, 17: 9-12). Every male child is circumcised on the eighth day. Only if the child's health demands postponement, does the ceremony take place on a later date. Among traditional and orthodox Jews circumcision is performed by a *Mohel*; a man trained to perform this rite. Among reformed Jews circumcision is sometime performed by a doctor in the presence of a *Rabbi*, who leads the prayer."<sup>16</sup>

Dr Ezra Spicehandler of Hewbrew Union College, Jerusalem informed me, when he met me at a Canterbury Conference in 1976, that now baptism is essential only for converting non-Jews to Judaism before they are circumcised, but for those born of Jewish parents only circumcision is necessary. Even the liberal philosopher Spinoza could say of circumcision, "Such great importance do I attach to the sign of the covenant that I am persuaded that it is sufficient by itself to maintain the separate existence of the nation for ever."<sup>17</sup> This idea of maintaining existence of the nation is very much there in the Sikh baptism from the time of Gurū Nānak to the time of Gurū Gobīnd Singh, the creator of the *Khālsā* Holy Order.

#### CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

Christianity rejected circumcision but accepted immersion in water as means of baptism, while Islām rejected baptism by water, but accepted circumcision as means of conversion. Scholars of Judaism assert that the only Christian conception of baptism at variance with Jewish ideas is displayed in the declaration of John

14. Bhāi Manī Singh, *Sikhān dī Bhagatmālā*, Sākhī, 103.
15. *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*, New York, 1925.
16. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, See Baptism.
17. Saul Spiro, *Fundamentals of Judaism*, p. 87.
18. *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*, New York, 1925.
19. (i) *New Catholic Encyclopaedia: Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible* (Ed: Arthur Buttrick).
- (ii) Ronald Lawler, *The Teaching of Christ*, Tr. Payne.
- (iii) Murray, *Christian Baptism*.
- (iv) O Cullman, *Baptism*, Eng Tr. Reid. (These are the books referred for Christian Baptism).
20. George Buhler, Tr. *Apasthamba*, Prasna. I, Patala. I, Khaṇḍā. I.
21. *Grihya Sūtra* of Gobhila II, *Prapathika*. II, *Kandika*. 10.
22. Gautama, *Institutes of the Sacred Law*, Chapter. 1.
23. The Hindu Sacraments are given in the *Institute of Viṣṇu*, Tr. Julius Jolly, pp. 113-116.
24. James Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*.
25. *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, vol. iii: The Book of Discipline (*Vinaya Pitaka*) in the *Sacred Books of Buddhists*.
26. Spencer Trimingham, *The Ṣūfī Orders of Islām*, p. 181.
27. Al Hujwīrī, *Kashf Al Mahjūb*, Tr. R.A. Nicholson, pp. 54-55.
28. Shihāb-ud-dīn al Sūhrāwardī, *Awārif ul Musārif*, pp. 68-69.
29. For the Rules of Ṣūfī Novices, see *Kitāb-al-Murīdān*, Tr. Menahem Milson.  
The significance of the Mystic Rose of the *Qādrīs* is described in Browne's *Dervishes*.

## CHAPTER 5

### EARLY SIKH BAPTISM: *CHARANAMRIT* FROM GURŪ NĀNAK TO GURŪ GOBĪND SĪNGH

Only on receiving ordination from the Gurū  
Can a disciple call himself a Sikh.

Bhāi Gurdās, *Vār. 3, Paurī. 11*<sup>1</sup>

#### MYSTICAL PHILOSOPHY OF SIKH BAPTISM

From the time of Gurū Nānak to Gurū Gobīnd Sīng and even in later period, baptism was not administered to people indiscriminately, because baptism was not mere conversion from one faith to another, or from no faith to a new faith, but a moment of spiritual illumination of the disciple by the personal touch, or the inner radiance of the true Gurū: the perfect Apostle.<sup>1</sup> Through the Sikh initiation which was quite original in form, content and meaning, the Divine Masters, Gurū Nānak-Gurū Gobīnd Sīng, imparted the spark of His Light to the novice, and awakened his consciousness to new mystical and moral perceptions. From the day of initiation the novice enters a new discipline, which is not only different and distinct from Islāmic and Hindu disciplines in form and content, but was in itself a life of rare devotion and dedication. Bhāi Gurdās who lived with the third, fourth, fifth and sixth Gurūs and was a co-compiler of *Ādi Gurū Granth* and himself author of monumental works, which have been blessed by Gurū Arjan as canonized scriptures and the Key to *Ādi Gurū Granth*, defines a practicing Sikh thus:

that one who would come after him would not baptized with water, but with the Holy Ghost (*Mark*, i. 8; *John*, i, 27). Yet a faint resemblance to the notion is displayed in the belief expressed in the *Talmud*, that the Holy Spirit could be drawn upon as water is drawn from the well (based upon *Isaiah*, xii. 3; *Yer Sukk*, v. 1; 55 a of *Joshua*, b. Levi). And there is somewhat Jewish tinge even to the prophecy of the Evangelists (*Mathew*, iii, 11 and *Luke*, iii, 16), who declare that Jesus will baptize with fire as well as with the Holy Ghost, for according to Abbahu, true baptism is performed with fire (*Sanh*, 39 a). Both the statements of Abbahu and of the Evangelists must, of course, be taken metaphorically.<sup>18</sup>

In Christianity baptism with water is intimately linked with revelation of the Holy Spirit. "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (*John*, 3:5). Jesus speaks of his death as baptism—this later baptism on Cavalry inaugurated a wider ministry unfettered by the limitations of earthly missions. St. Paul in *Romans* (6:3-5) states, "Do you know that all we, who have been baptized into Jesus Christ, have been baptized into death. For we were buried with him by means of baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ has arisen from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life."<sup>19</sup>

#### INITIATORY CEREMONIES IN HINDUISM

In Hinduism, the initiation (*Upanayana*) is based fundamentally on the principle of perpetuating the four castes, *Brāhmīns* *Kāśātrīyās*, *Vaiśyās* and *Śūdrās*. Each preceding caste is superior by birth to the one following. The Śūdra is considered to be born with a load of *karmic* sins committed by him in his past life, which he can expiate only by serving higher castes by performing degrading menial duties for them. All except Śūdrās, or those who have committed grave sins can be initiated and can study *Vedas* and kindle sacred fire.<sup>20</sup> The initiation is the consecration in accordance with the text of *Vedas*, of only the male Hindus. Hindu women cannot be initiated. The Brāhmīn is the privileged class



in every phase of initiation.<sup>21</sup>

A Brāhmiṇ is initiated at 8 and is seated on antelope skin; a Kaśatriyā at the age of 11 and is seated on the skin of a spotted deer; and Vaiśyā is initiated at the age of 12 and is seated on the skin of a cow-hide. When the Brāhmiṇ has passed 16th, the Kaśatriyā 22nd and the Vaiśyā 24th year of his life, they have lost their right of initiation. Let them not initiate such men nor teach them, nor perform sacrifice for them.<sup>22</sup>

"The girdle of the Brāhmiṇ should be made of *munge* grass, that of Kaśatriyā of a bow string, that of Vaiśyā of woollen thread. The garment of the Brāhmiṇs should be dyed red, those of the two castes with turmeric. The staff of the Brāhmiṇ should be made of *Bilvā* or *Palāsā* wood. For the other two castes the staves should be made of *Pilū* wood. Having had the hair shaved all round his head, he is initiated. The *Gāyatrī Mantra* is recited to the Brāhmiṇ, *Trishtubh* to a Kaśatriyā and *Gagati* to a Vaiśyā. The teacher makes the student sip water three times, and then hands over the staff with the five verses: 'Blessing they give us.....' (*Rg Veda*, V, 51, 11-51). The student then goes to the village to beg food, first from his mother and then from a woman who will not refuse. He offers fee and alms to his Brāhmiṇ teacher."<sup>23</sup>

#### INITIATORY CEREMONIES IN BUDDHISM

When Lord Buddha preached his first sermon in Isipātne in Benāras to the five Brāhmiṇ ascetics (*Pañchavagiya*) they became his first formal converts and they were the first to enter the order. Hence they constituted the original founders of *bhikkhū-saṅgha*. He adopted the formula *ehi-bhikkhū* (Come O Monk) for their admission, they were called the *Pañchavagiya*. After them the total number was sixty.<sup>24</sup> There were two forms of Buddhist initiations or *Dīkṣā*:

(i) *Pravrijiya* (*Pāli: Pabbaja*) *Lower and Preparatory*: Literally the term *Pravrijiya* means, 'going out' and by this ceremony one goes out from prior state of life. At this stage boys are admitted to a monk's hermitage in order to live with them. It corresponds to the

*Brahmchārī* initiation of Hindu monks. Without the preceptor's permission or direction he cannot do anything.

(ii) *Upāsampada*: means arrival or entry into the fully accredited members of the Saṅgha. It is never confirmed on a novice under the age of 20 years. When he is ordained, he becomes a *Bhikkhū*. After ten years standing, he becomes a *Sthāvirā* (*Therā*) or Elder. This ceremony is generally performed in April and May on a full-moon day. Consensus is taken whether he deserves it or not. In the mystic school of Japanese Buddhism water is sprinkled and it is symbolic of divine knowledge.<sup>25</sup>

#### INITIATORY CEREMONIES IN ŠŪFĪSM

There is no baptism as such in Islām, but circumcision serves the same purpose. However, almost all major Šūfī orders had their distinct methods of initiation along with some fundamental common features, and many Šūfī Orders had their special symbols. "Šūfī dress was an important outward sign of the Šūfī way of life, as the very name, derived from *Šūf* (wool), worn by early ascetics (*zuhhād*) bears witness. Like other material symbols it came to have an inner significance and investiture with such a garment soon became a sign of initiation. The use of the wool went out of fashion during the eleventh century A.D. in favour of the patched garment called *muraqqa'a* or *khirqā*."<sup>26</sup>

Al Hujwīrī writes in his *Kashf Al-Mahjūb*, "The Šūfī Sheikhs observe the following rule. When a novice joins them, with the purpose of renouncing the world, they subject him to spiritual discipline for the space of three years. If he fulfil the requirements of this discipline, well and good; otherwise, they declare that he cannot be admitted to the Path: *Ṭarīqat*. The first year is devoted to service of the people, the second year to service of God, and the third year to the watching over his own heart.... The adept, then, who has attained perfection of saintship, takes the right course when he invests the novice with the *muraqqa'a* after a period of three years during which he has educated him in the necessary discipline. In respect of the qualification which it demands, the

muraqqa'a or khirqa is comparable to a winding-sheet (*kafan*): the wearer must resign all his hopes of the pleasures of life, and purge his heart of all sensual delights and devote his life entirely to the service of God."<sup>27</sup> "The investment with the khirqa establishes a bond between the Sheikh and the aspirant, and makes the aspirant subject himself to the discipline (*tahkīm*) of the Sheikh; this *tahkīm* being permissible in law. This khirqa is the symbol of the oath of investiture."<sup>28</sup> "Most of the *Ṣūfī* paths have their signs; the sign of *Qādirīs* is a rose, which is green because the word *Ḥayy* (the living one) was manifested in green colour to one of the Sheikh."<sup>29</sup>

## REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Thomas Merton, *The New Man*, p. 142.
2. G.A. Gaskell, *Dictionary of All Scriptures and Myths*.
3. Van Doornik et al, *A Handbook of the Catholic Faith*.
4. Arthur Buttrick et al, *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*.
5. James Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*. See Sacrament.
6. Bhāi Gurdās, *Var.* 20, *Paurī*. 10.
7. *Ibid.*, *Kabitt*. 309.
8. *khāṇḍ ghrīt chūn jal pāvak ikatr bhae,*  
*pañch mil pragat pañchamrit pragās hai.*  
 Sugar, ghee (clarified butter), flour, water and fire,  
 These five ingredients combine to make *pañchamrit* (*kaṛāhpraśād*).  
 Bhāi Gurdās, *Kabitt*. 124.
9. See *Ardāsa* (Congregational Prayer), English Translation, Chapter 16.
10. *Laṅgarī daulatī vanḍiai rasī amrit khīrī ghiālī.*  
 In the *durbār* of Gurū Aṅgad is daily distributed the ambrosial sacramental food, which includes milk pudding and mixed with *ghee*.  
*Ādi Gurū Granth, Vār Rāi Balwaṇḍ and Sattā*, p. 967.
11. Bhāi Manī Singh, *Sikhān dī Bhagatmālā*, Sākhī.15.
12. *Rehitnāmā Bhāi Desā Singh*. Complete translation given in Chapter 10.
13. *Laṅgarū chalai guršabadī, Harī toḍī nā āvī khaṭiai.*  
 In the *durbār* of Gurū Aṅgad there is distributed continuously the spiritual food of the Divine Word, and there is never any sign of diminishing in this overflowing treasure of Divine Wisdom.  
*Ādi Gurū Granth, Vār Rāi Balwaṇḍ and Sattā*, p. 967.

*murdā hoi murīd na galī hovṇā.*  
*sābarū sidakī sahīdū bharam bhau khovṇā.*  
 Dead to the world,  
 A Sikh lives in the spirit of the Gurū.  
 A man does not become a Sikh  
 By merely paying lip service to Him.  
 A Sikh dispels all doubts and fears,  
 And lives a life of deep patience and faith.  
 Verily, he is a living martyr.  
 A slave of the love of the Lord;  
 He does what the Lord Wills.  
 He forgets all hunger and sleep in His love.  
 His hands are busy helping the needy.  
 His hands are busy washing their feet.  
 Magnanimous, tolerant and serene,  
 He lives in the service of humanity.  
 In glory a Sikh does not laugh,  
 In suffering he does not weep,  
 He is a seer living in His presence.  
 He is a devotee imbued with His love.  
 He steadily grows into perfection  
 And is blessed and adored  
 Like the new moon on the Muslim sacred day of *Īd*.

Bhāi Gurdās, *Vār. 3, Pauṛī. 18.*

During my lifetime I have met about a dozen such practicing Sikhs who had attained the highest spiritual state, and it is *Amrit* baptism and their dedication to the vows of the rules of contemplation, action and service of humanity, which have made them such. One of these great souls is a woman, still shunning publicity of any kind, but living in the peace and freedom of a dedicated discipline. It is a life of spiritual effort, a life of continuous dying and reliving in the new illumined consciousness.

That is why Bhāi Gurdās calls the path of initiated Sikhs, "Narrower than a hair's breadth and sharper than a two-edged sword: *khaṇḍā*."<sup>2</sup> At the moment of initiation, the Gurū reveals his

Divine Personality through the Word till in the experience of the disciple, the full and resplendent Light of God become manifest in the stream of consciousness (*Surfi*) of the disciple (*Chelā*). At this stage the Word (*Śabad*) alone is the living Teacher, and the mind concentrating on the inner Music of the Word is the disciple (*Chelā*).<sup>3</sup>

Thus the disciple possesses within himself an illumined Spirit, which is formed by the coalescence of our soul with the Eternal Spirit of the Gurū and God. He received into his inner-self the perennial Music of the Word, and contemplation of God's Name becomes for him living in the sanctuary of His Presence. Thus Sikh baptism is not only merely an initiatory ceremony, but it is instrumental in revelation of inner perceptions and Light Divine. The sanctifying grace of baptism brings with it serene and blessed Light, which spreads over the whole purified atmosphere of the soul's summit, and within our heart there continuously shines that insatiable little diamond of spiritual awareness. Baptism is what the Sikh Scriptures call rebirth (*punar-janam*): "*Satigur kai janme gavanii miṭāiā*: A rebirth within the House of the Gurū eliminates the cycle of birth and death."<sup>4</sup> The upward progress is not based on any mechanical routine of prayers and practices, but in seeking the grace and blessedness of God by contemplation, service and dedication. The mystically oriented Sikh baptism aims at giving to the sincere seekers the power and full revelation of Divine Life. With each pious endeavour there is unveiling of a higher state of rich ethical and spiritual living, which must be used as a redeeming wealth to help the suffering humanity, groping for solace and peace.

#### GOD'S CALL TO GURŪ NĀNAK

Gurū Nānak was in his twenties when he received the *Call*. In the Elected Silence of his enforced solitude in the forest around Sultānpur (in the present district of Kapūrthālā), Gurū Nānak came face to face with the Supreme Being and received from God,

as the symbolic language of the mystical literature puts it, the Cup of Immortality, the Nectar of His Divine Presence. God said in the language in which He spoke to prophets, "Nānak, whom you favour shall be blessed by Me. My Name is the Supreme Being; your name shall be the Gurū; Spirit of My Own Being." Nānak bowed before the Lord. God bestowed on him the robe of honour of His grace and vision (*Darśan*). God then said, "You, O Nānak, are the liberated and enlightened one. Whoever follows in your footsteps shall be liberated and enlightened."<sup>5</sup> This historic communion and dialogue of Nānak with God is recorded by Bhāi Naṇḍ Lāl Goyā, the Poet Laureate of Gurū Gobīnd Singh as follows:

*ki manam dar tū gḥair tū kas nīsat*

*har chih kḥāhm kunam hamā adlīsat.*

Thus spake God unto Gurū Nānak:

You, My Son, are the true Gurū: Enlightener,

Go, reveal My Light to the world.

I will abide in you in full radiant glory.

My Spirit is in your soul and being.

My Will is your Will.

My Light is your wisdom.

You know My Law and Justice.

Go, reveal the real Path to humanity.

Be the singer of My Love and Power.

I will be your Helper in your mission.

I will be your Friend and companion ever.

He who understands your greatness, My Son,

And learns from you My glory and wisdom,

I will reveal Myself to him.

This is My abiding promise to you.

Carry all over the world

The torch of My Light and Truth.

Be a World Teacher, My Son.

Tell the misguided humanity,

Without My Light and Power

The whole world is not worth a grain.  
 By My Will, I give Light and Wisdom to men.  
 By My Will, I leave them in darkness.  
 Religious leaders and *Pundits*,  
 Have become hypocrites and magicians.  
 They may, with limited powers—My gifts  
 Even kill the living,  
 And bring the dead to life.  
 They may make fire dance on water.  
 These are magical tricks,  
 And fruitless feats of occult powers.  
 Show mankind the way to Me; the ultimate Reality.  
 Teach the right contemplation of Truth,  
 Prevent them from going on the wrong path.  
 Guide them to My Door, My Son.

Bhāi Nañd Lāl, *Gañjānāmā*, 25-38.

It is after receiving this historic *Call* that Gurū Nānak founded the New Faith, and he made this new baptism called the *Charan Amrit* or *Pāhul* Ceremony, the basis of his New Dispensation. It was then known as the *Sikh Pañth*, the *Nirmal Pañth*, the *Gurmukh Pañth*, or the Community of the Enlightened and Pure.

#### GURŪ NĀNAK'S NEW DISPENSATION AND BAPTISM

Inviting men of all faiths and creeds to his newly founded faith, Gurū Nānak made it clear that he was determined to remove caste, colour and race prejudices. Under a new inspiration and a clear vision of what an all comprehensive religion should be, Gurū Nānak introduced what in history is known as *Charan Pāhul Amrit*: Baptism of the Lotus Feet. Bhāi Gurdās testifies:

*sunī pukārī dātār prabhū Gurū Nānak jag māhī pathāiā.*  
*Charan dhoi Rehirās karī charaṇāmritū Sikhān pīlāiā.*  
 In this dark age, Gurū Nānak revealed  
 God, the Supreme Being, is the One and no other.

He initiated his disciples with Charan Amrit:  
 Water sanctified by the lotus feet of the Gurū.  
 He gave a New Code of Conduct  
 As the highway to the path of Truth: *Rehirās*

Bhāi Gurdās, *Vār. 1, Paurī. 23.*

Etymologically Charan Pāhul Amrit conveys the fundamental meaning of the baptism. The word *Charan* means holy feet, usually called lotus feet in the Sikh Scriptures. The word lotus feet is also mostly written as *Charan Kamal* (*kamal* means lotus). Lotus in the mystical philosophy is the symbol of Wisdom, bearing the fruit of the Spirit. Barlow says, "The lotus plant was sacred with Egyptians as with the Indians. According to Rouge, it was the symbol of the New Birth, but Lepsius considers it as the symbol of inexhaustible life."<sup>6</sup> Thus in Sikh philosophy and mysticism, the Gurū's feet are called lotus feet (Charan Kamal), because they symbolize the divine power which rekindles life in the dark and ignorant souls. It nowhere means human feet. Lotus feet in Sikh mysticism means the first rays of illumination, shed by divine revelation in the seeker's contemplation, which are symbolic of the Lord stepping into the inner sanctuary of the devotee's heart. In the Charan Pāhul ceremony, introduced by Gurū Nānak, the living Gurū touched with his Feet, the Water of baptism and sanctified it with his touch. It imparted to the Water the sanctifying power of inner purification, and the heart of the novice who receives it in full faith, feels it and experiences it. He transfigures just as philosopher's stone is said to change and transmute base metals into gold. That is why the lotus feet of the Gurū is compared to the philosopher's stone in *Ādi Gurū Granth*.

The word '*Pāhul*' literally means, that which bleaches. Without bleaching a cloth cannot be properly dyed in fast colour. Similarly without bleaching the heart of the novice with the baptismal water, sanctified by the Lotus Feet of the Lord, the heart and soul of a person cannot be dyed in the radiant colour of the Divine Name; the Word of God.



Thus the baptismal Water becomes the Pāhul after the ceremony is performed. The hymns recited in the baptismal Water (Five Daily Prayers) are ambrosia or Nectar. The word of God or the *Gurū-mantram* imparted by the Gurū is the essence of the Nectar of Life, and its contemplation leads to the spiritual awakening and the highest realization of divine Presence. The commandments for daily ethical living and a life of prayer and service of humanity is also ambrosial in spirit. Hence the totality of the baptismal water becomes Amrit: Elixir of Life.

*CHARAN PĀHUL CEREMONY*  
AND GURŪ GOBĪND SĪNGH

Gurū Gobīnd Sīng was 9 years old when he took up the pontific guidance of the Sikh Community, and he was 33 when he stopped using Charan Pāhul ceremony for baptism in 1699 A.D., and replaced it dramatically by baptism with the double-edged sword for the reasons which will be explained in the next three chapters. There is clear historical evidence that upto 1699 Gurū Gobīnd Sīng initiated disciples according to Charan Pāhul rites. A number of historical works bear witness to this fact.

The author of *Sau Sākhī* states: "A handsome young soft spoken lad came to pay homage to Gurū Gobīnd Sīng and said, "O true king, I am the son of Mamūlā. We are both baptized Sikhs. My father became a Sikh by being initiated through Charan Pāhul; baptism of the Lotus feet, while I was initiated Sikh by *Khaṇḍe dī Pāhul*, baptism by double-edged sword. I am a resident of Sirhind and goldsmith by profession. My father died lately and my mother is with me."<sup>7</sup>

In *Sūraj Parkāsh* and *Mehmā, Parkāsh*, two very important documents of Sikh history, a number of incidents are reported in this period of Sikh history, in which eminent disciples are initiated by Gurū Gobīnd Sīng and earlier Gurūs by the Charan Pāhul rites. Most conspicuous is the initiation of the Prince Rattan Rāi of Assām who came all the way from the distant province of Assām with very rare and precious presents. Prince Rattan Rāi while

parting from the Gurū is reported to have said, "Master, I shall always remain a devoted servant of the House of the true Gurū (Nānak-Gobiṇḍ Sīngh). I beg you to give me the gift of Sikhism and your gracious blessings for the future. Having seen the spiritual greatness and glory of your *durbār* and Divine Presence, I am overwhelmed. Considering me as your own, be gracious to uphold my honour and give me protection with your own sacred hands. Give me Master, the Charan Pāhul baptism and initiate me into your Faith."<sup>8</sup>

#### THE BRĀHMIṆS PROTEST AGAINST THE NEW DISPENSATION

In the New Dispensation of Gurū Nānak, people from the lowest caste and even Muslims were knit into one brotherhood stronger than family ties. They mixed freely and they ate in one place and they disregarded the laws of the Brāhmiṇs and the *Mullās*. Charity was not to be given to the priests and Brāhmiṇs, but to the poor and the needy. The Brāhmiṇs raised a loud protest in society, but Gurū Nānak completely disregarded it, asserting that he had broken away from Brāhmaṇical Hinduism and Islām. He said:

*Hindū mūle bhūle akhuṭī jānhī.*

*Nārdī kahiā sī pooj karānhī.*

The Hindus are fundamentally in error,

Having missed the right path, they wander in darkness;

Nārada led them to the worship of idols and images.

Thus, they have become spiritually blind and deaf.

In blind idolatrous worship, they live in utter darkness.

These uncultured fools worship stone-gods.

The stone-god easily sinks in the stream.

How can it help you to cross the Ocean of life.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Nānak, Rāga Bihāgrā, p. 556.*

During the time of Akbar the Brāhmiṇs wrote a letter of protest against Gurū Amar Dās and then against Gurū Arjan, saying, "The Sikh Gurūs have started a funny new religion, aimed

at destroying all that is best in Hinduism. They have abolished caste system, they allow Hindus to sit and eat with the Muslims, and make the high and low caste sit with one another in their open kitchen. They have also introduced a strange ceremony, the Charan Pāhul, for initiation and they involve people of all faiths and castes in their prayers and worship. This religion is a mixture of all faiths, designed to attract all faiths and aimed at destroying the most precious traditions of *Varṇāśram* in Hinduism. No one will now care for the Kaśatrīyās and the Brāhmiṇs, because petty low caste people are even taught the use of the sword. The Sikh Gurūs have completely rejected Hindu ceremonies and all sacred rites of the *Vedas* and *Śāstras* concerning birth, marriage and death.” In the face of such virulent criticism Gurū Arjan emphatically stated his position:

*vart na rahau na meh ramdānā.*

*tisū sewī jo rakhai nidānā.*

I am neither a Hindu nor a Mussalmān.

I neither keep Hindu fasts nor the Islāmic *Ramaḍān*.

I serve Him alone, who in the end will save me.

My Lord is both the Muslim *Allāh* and the Hindu *Gosāin*.

And thus have I settled the dispute between the Hindus and Muslims.

I do not go on pilgrimage to Meccā.

Nor do I bathe in Hindu holy places.

I serve the One Lord, and none besides Him.

I neither perform Hindu worship,

Nor say Muslim prayer.

I belong body and soul to the One God

Who is both *Allāh* and *Rāma*.

Encountering the True Gurū one encounters God.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Arjan, *Rāga Bhairu*, p. 1136.

To the threatening challenges that continued to come, the Sikh Gurūs repeatedly said that theirs was a new religion with a new church, prayers and modes of worship of their own. They were

quite unconcerned about what the Brāhmins and the Mullās did. They had established the New Faith not for confrontation with any religion, but to bring all religions in the spirit of moral and spiritual co-operation in the love of God. But the repeated challenges and threats of the fanatic Hindus and Muslims led to the martyrdom of Gurū Arjan on Jeth Sudī 4, 1663 Bk/May 30, 1606 (Friday) at the age of 48. He was tortured to death by the orders of Emperor Jahāngīr, and his was the first martyrdom for his convictions and faith in the long history of India.

### THE DOCTRINE OF THE DISCIPLE EXALTED TO GURŪ AND THE GURŪ BECOMING A HUMBLE DISCIPLE OF THE ETERNAL

Six months before he passed away from this ephemeral world, Gurū Nānak installed his devoted disciple Lehṇā (Gurū Aṅgad) as his successor and enthroned him on the pontific throne on Asū Vadi 10, 1596 Bk/ September 7, 1539 (Sunday). While performing the ceremony of installation, Gurū Nānak seated Aṅgad on the pontific throne circumambulated three times around him and then prostrated before him in humble submission declaring: "From this day you will initiate disciples, and you sit on the pontific throne while I will remain a disciple." Thus the Founder of Sikhism, Bābā Nānak, installed his disciple as the Gurū: Apostle With Prophetic Mission, and he himself chose to remain a disciple (chelā). The great World-Teacher, who was born as the Gurū, chose to die as the disciple, having created another Nānak, a complete embodiment of his mind, soul and spirit.

Bhāi Gurdās calls this utter humility of the Gurū and this strangely new method of transferring Divine Power as, "making the holy Ganges river run backward from the plains to the mountains." Henceforth every Gurū installed his successor some days or months before his death and acted as the humble disciple of his successor.

"The Gurū became the disciple and the disciple became the Gurū by exalting him, after putting him to severe tests. From one Supreme Person, a Prophet, another Supreme Person, a Prophet was born. One Light blended with another. The two then became One in Spirit and with two apparent forms."<sup>9</sup>

It is important to grasp this doctrine in order to understand Gurū Gobīnd Singh's drastic change from Charan Pāhul baptism to baptism of the two-edged sword: Khaṇḍe dī Pāhul. We shall now discuss the Sikh Code of Conduct (*Rehit*) recorded in the Sikh Scriptures and history during the lifetime of the first nine Gurūs and the early life of Gurū Gobīnd Singh in the next chapter, and show that ethically, theologically, spiritually the Rehit (the Sikh Code of Conduct) was basically the same during early period, as that enunciated by Gurū Gobīnd Singh, when he created the Khālsā Holy Order to hand over his responsibility as the Gurū to a spiritually and socially organized Religious Order of Universal Community.

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. *Gurđikhyā lai soe Sikh sadāiyā*, Bhāi Gurdās, *Vār. 3, Pauṛī. 11.*
2. Bhāi Gurdās, *Vār. 28, Pauṛī. 1.*
3. *Sabadū Gurū suraṭi dhunī chelā*, Gurū Nānak, *Ādi Gurū Granth, Siddha Gosāi*, p. 943.
4. *Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Nānak, *Rāga Rāmkalī*, p. 940.
5. Trilochan Singh, *Gurū Nānak: Founder of Sikhism*, pp. 70-71, quotes from Bālā's *Janam Sākhī*, Litho, p. 89.
6. Barlow, *Essays on Symbolism*, p. 32.
7. *Sau Sākhī*, Sākhī No. 25, Eng Tr. by Sir Attar Singh (British Museum).
8. Kavī Santokh Singh, *Sūraj Parkāsh, Ritu. 1, Anṣū. 22*, verse. 46.
9. There are nearly a dozen quotations on this theme in the *Vārs* of Bhāi Gurdās, notably *Vār. 9, Pauṛis. 8, 16.*

## CHAPTER 6

### THE SIKH CODE OF CONDUCT FROM GURŪ NĀNAK TO GURŪ GOBĪND SINGH

No living and progressive religion can survive without inner and outer laws or rules of mental, moral, social and spiritual discipline called *Adab* (pl. *ādāb*) by the Šūfis and *Rehit* by the Sikhs. When the symbolic features of these laws are taken literally, as less enlightened people tend to do, the result is egoism and bigotry. When the outer discipline is considered as means, and efforts for moral and spiritual exaltation are intensified, the seeker of truth achieves one higher stage after another. Oral instructions of the Gurūs regarding *Rehit* were recorded earlier in *Sākhīs* (Sermons). In some of the recensions of *Ādī Gurū Granth*, written during the time of Gurū Hargobīnd, we have the oldest *Rehitnāmā* recorded on the blank pages, attached to *Ādī Gurū Granth* entitled "Five things a Sikh should do, and Five things he should not do."

The word *Rehit* occurs in more than thirty-five hymns, revealing its importance in *Ādī Gurū Granth*. *Bhaṭṭ* (Bard) Bhikhā, the leaders of the *Bhaṭṭ*s contributors to *Ādī Gurū Granth* writes:

*rahio sant hau tolī sādḥ bahutere dīṭhe.*

*sanmyāsī tapaśīah mukhū e paṇḍit mīṭhe.*

In search of one true saint

I vainly wandered about;

Recluses, I encountered many,

Sweet tongued no doubt were they;

For full one year in this search I wandered.

None of them gave me the solace of spiritual light.

I heard them talk a lot of high ideals,

But their practice was most disappointing.  
 Discarding the Name of God,  
 They indulged in worldly ways,  
 O what need I say of them?  
 By the Grace of God  
 I have found Gurū Amar Dās  
 By thy Will, I shall ever abide, O Gurū.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Bhaṭṭ Bhikhā,  
*Sawāiye*, Mahalā. III, pp. 1395-96.

So the word Rehit simply means to practice with mind, speech and deed, the moral and spiritual ideals which are imparted by the Spiritual Guide. Such *Vārs* of Bhāi Gurdās as No. 6, 9, 18, 19, 20, 22, 28, 29, each having 20 to 23 stanzas (*Paurīs*) are nothing but authentic Rehitnāmās, which *Gurmukh* Sikhs or *Gur-Sikhs* of yester years and *Khālsā* of the *Khālsā* Holy Order have followed and must follow all times to come. The *Ādi Gurū Granth* is full of these moral instructions pertaining to the ethical code, but we shall present the testimony of Gurū Rām Dās, Bhāi Gurdās and Bhāi Naṇḍ Lāl, which sum up all that can be said about the Sikh Code of Conduct from Gurū Nānak to the day of founding of the *Khālsā* Holy Order by Gurū Gobind Singh in 1699 A.D.

#### TESTIMONY OF GURŪ RĀM DĀS

Gurū Rām Dās was the fourth Gurū of the Sikhs, and the founder of the city of Amritsar, known in history as Chak Rām Dās or Rāmdāspur. He preached pure devotion to God, who is the one real Friend of all. He was an Apostle of love, and his writings emphasized on the theme of divine love. When people criticized Sikhism because of leading householder's life, the Gurū said, "A man may wear a Yogi's garb, but without true devotion the Light of God never enters a seeker's heart". He also insisted that "sincere Sikh devotees should contemplate the meaning of the hymns when they recited or sang them, and thus extract the full

flavour of the Nectar in the Divine Word as the bee sucks honey from the flowers.”<sup>1</sup>

He laid strong emphasis on strictly and regularly following the rules of prayer and worship, and made ceaseless efforts to reach God through love and discipline: “My eyes are wet with the Lord’s nectar, my soul is drenched in His love. He tested my heart with His touchstone. He found it pure.”<sup>2</sup> “Be there gale and storm and torrential rain; even then I would set forth to meet my Beloved. Be there vast seas separating the disciples from the Gurū, even then a Sikh would cross turbulent oceans to meet the Beloved.”<sup>3</sup> Gurū Rām Dās gives the Sikh Code of Conduct thus:

*Gur Satigur kã jo Sikhū akhãe*

*Su bhalke uṭhī harī nāmū dhiāvai.*

He who calls himself a Sikh of the true Gurū,

Let him on the morrow rise betimes,

And contemplate on the Name of God.

Let him with disciplined effort

Rise in the dark hours of the morn,

Take his bath and clean his soul in the tank of Nectar.

As he meditates on His Name, imparted by the Gurū,

All his sins and evils will be washed away.

When the dawn breaks at sunrise,

Let him recite his prayers and sing his hymns.

Throughout the day while he moves about,

Let him enshrine in his heart the Name of God.

He should repeat the Lord’s Name with every breath.

Such a Sikh is indeed very dear to the Gurū.

A Sikh who receives the mercy and grace of the Lord,

Receives the blessed sermon of illumination from the Gurū.

Nānak seeks the dust of the feet of such a Sikh,

Who utters the Name and inspires others to utter.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Rām Dās, Vār Gaurī, pp. 305-6.*

Gurū Rām Dās highlights in this hymn the following essential features of the Sikh Code of Conduct (Rehit):



(i) A Sikh who sleeps at normal hours of the night, must rise early in the morning about two hours before dawn.

(ii) He should perform two-fold ablution. He should bathe his body in clean water, and if while bathing he recites the hymns of the Gurū or utters the Name of God in deep remembrance, he shall be performing the second ablution of bathing his mind in the nectar tank of the divine Word. Such should be his two-fold morning ablution.

(iii) Upto sunrise, he should, with deep concentration and attention, inwardly contemplate the Name of God. Such a contemplation in the early hours of morning or when complete solitude is available, will erase from the seekers heart all propensities and sins.

(iv) Immediately after sunrise he should say his prayers: *Jaṛuṃjī, Anandū* etc.

(v) Even in the day-time, while he is performing his mundane duties, he should remember God every moment by repeating it silently in tune with every breath. This state of contemplation is achieved by him, who lives according to the Sikh Code of Conduct.

(vi) Blessed is such a Sikh who remembers God himself and inspires others to remember Him.

It is important to mention here that in many other hymns of the Gurū there are strict injunctions against drinking wine, adultery, hypocrisy or mere pretensions to religion, dishonesty, disloyalty, ungratefulness, treachery or earning one's living through evil or sinful means. Even charity given out of stolen property, or out of money earned by exploiting the poor is sin, and will be punished in the Lord's court by His ultimate justice. Gurū Rām Dās in one of his hymns says, "A man comes with a bowl full of wine; another man fills a cup of it and drinks lustily out of it. Drinking wine cup after cup, he loses his sense of discrimination and his balance of mind. Perversity takes the better of him and he talks senselessly. He loses all sense of right or wrong, good or bad,

and even the sense of what is his and what is not his? Such a man, who abandoning himself to drinking wine, forgets God, is punished in the Lord's Court and is severely chastised. O Man, as far as it is within your control shun this wine. Drink only the Wine of Love of God, drinking which you are intoxicated by the divine knowledge of His Presence and blessedness of His Grace."<sup>4</sup>

### TESTIMONY OF BHĀI GURDĀS

Bhāi Gurdās was nephew of the third Gurū, Amar Dās and the co-compiler of *Ādi Gurū Granth*. His works, the *Vārs* on Sikh Philosophy and the *Kabitt Sawāīye* on Sikh Mysticism, were blessed as "Key to the *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib*" by Gurū Arjan. He was the first to give an analytical exposition of all Sikh doctrines. Some of his *Vārs* and *Kabitts* are devoted exclusively to the Sikh Code of Conduct, as it was practiced during his lifetime, from Gurū Amar Dās to Gurū Hargobind.

Bhāi Gurdās says, "A Sikh of the Gurū worships only One God and looks on no gods and goddesses for inspiration and support. For him to turn to gods and goddesses for inspiration and support for material blessings was like a housewife becoming a whore, chasing many men for depraved satisfaction."<sup>5</sup> The Essence of God's vision as revealed to Gurū Nānak, is given in the *Mūlmantra* (Fundamental Article of Faith) of the Sikhs. "God is One. He pervades all. Eternal Truth is His Name; Creator of all things, fearing nothing, and at enmity with none. Timeless is His image. Not begotten; Being of His own Being; By the Grace of the Gurū, He is revealed to Man."<sup>6</sup> The divine Word (*Gurū-mantra*) given to the world by Gurū Nānak is "*Vāhi Gurū: Wonder of Wonder art Thou O Revealer of Light.*"<sup>7</sup>

"The Sikhs of the Gurū rise early in the morning and take their bath."<sup>8</sup> "In the ambrosial hours of the morning they sit in contemplation of the Unfathomable Lord and meditate with inward attention and concentration on the Name of God. At daybreak they recite the morning prayer *Japuḥ*. At sunset they

recite *Rehirās* and at night, before going to bed, they recite *Kīrtan Sohilā* (Bedtime Prayer)."<sup>9</sup>

"After saying his morning prayer a Sikh goes to the Presence of the Gurū in the congregation and listens to the recitation and singing of the hymns of the Sikh Scriptures. Leaving all scruples and social prejudices, he serves the devotees of God. He earns his living by righteous means and shares the fruits of his labours with others. He first serves his guests with food and then eats contentedly what is left."<sup>10</sup> "All the four castes, all the creeds and all the sects of *Yogīs* and *Sannyāsīs*, when entering the fold of Sikhism, merge and blend into One Brotherhood; the *Nirmal Pañth* or *Gurmukh Pañth*: The Community of the Pure, or the Brotherhood of the Enlightened."<sup>11</sup>

"A Sikh of the Gurū is meek and humble when he has power: "*hondai tāt so hoe nitāṇā*: he is humble in honour and glory;" "*hondai mān jo rahai nimāṇā*: he endures and tolerates what is difficult to endure: *ahar jāṇā*;" he is sweet of speech, humble in manners, chivalrous and charitable towards the destitute and the needy."<sup>12</sup>

#### TESTIMONY OF BHĀI NAṆD LĀL

Bhāi Naṇd Lāl was the poet Laureate and the most dearly loved disciple of Gurū Gobind Singh. He wrote two *Rehitnāmās*: one before the *Khālsā* Holy Order was ordained and the other after 1699, when the *Khālsā* was created. The exact date of his birth and death is not known. He was brought up in *Ghaznī* and moved to Multān, where he was a high official of the Mughal Court and later *Mīr Munṣī* of Prince Mu'azzam, Aurangzeb's eldest son. When Prince Mu'azzam was arrested, Bhāi Naṇd Lāl came to Anandpur and became one of the most devoted disciples of Gurū Gobind Singh. He was instrumental in cementing excellent relations between Bahādūr Shāh and Gurū Gobind Singh. He is the author of nine books on Sikh mysticism, written in the Persian mystical tradition of Rūmī and Ḥāfiz.

## BHĀI NAṆD LĀL'S REHITNĀMĀ

SIKH CODE OF CONDUCT: 1695 A.D.

Bhāi Naṇḍ Lāl wrote two Rehitnāmās, both published in the complete works of Bhāi Naṇḍ Lāl, preserved in Bhāi Kāhan Singh's library, entitled *Bhāi Naṇḍ Lāl Granthāvalī*. The first was written in 1695 A.D. as the colophon indicates. It starts with the line: "*Gursikh Rehit suno mere māt*: Listen my friend to the Rehit of a *Gursikh*." It is Gurū Gobīnd Singh addressing Bhāi Naṇḍ Lāl and answering some questions about Rehit. The dialogue is between *Srī Gurdev Vāch* and *Naṇḍ Lāl Vāch*: the utterance of the Gurū and Naṇḍ Lāl.

Spake Gurū Gobīnd Singh: "Listen my friend, Naṇḍ Lāl, to my instructions on the Sikh Code of Conduct: *Gursikh Rehit*. A Sikh of the Gurū should rise up at dawn and take his bath and sit in contemplation of the Divine Name. He should then recite the morning prayer *Japujī* and *Jāpūi*.<sup>13</sup> After morning prayer, he should seek the companionship of my Presence: *darśan*. He should come with the utmost reverence and sit in divine Presence of the Gurū. In the day-time he should listen to religious discourses. At sunset he should recite or listen to *Rehirās*: Evening Prayer. He should also listen to the discourses and *Kīrtan* in the evening. Such a Sikh is liberated and reaches the state of immortality." (1-6)

Bhāi Naṇḍ Lāl asked Gurū Gobīnd Singh: "*Gurūdeva*, you say every Sikh far and near must seek your divine Presence. Will you, Master, graciously describe your inscrutable Presence and Personality?" Spake Gurū Gobīnd Singh in reply: "Listen attentively dear Naṇḍ Lāl, I have three Personalities and three different manifestations of my divine Presence:

- (i) *Nirguṇa Svarūp*: the Attributeless Form, when the Essence of Gurū's Personality is one with the Transcendent Being.
- (ii) *Sarguṇ Svarūp*: when my divine Personality reflects in the illumined souls of illumined disciples and the congregation of the seekers of Truth: *Sādh Saṅgat*.
- (iii) *Gurū Śabad*: Form Manifest as the Word of God and revealed

in His Name and the Sacred Scriptures, the *Ādi Gurū Granth*. (6-8)

"My Primal Personality, the Nirguṇa Svarūp (Attributeless Form), is beyond all earthly and human attributes and beyond the grasp of human reason, and therefore it is described as Unfathomable and "Not this, not this." Just as the sun reflects equally in all the vessels of water, so also the divine Light of the Gurū pervades all hearts. It is there as the indwelling spirit of enlightened souls, who have been illumined by the grace of the Gurū. This is my Sarguṇ Svarūp. In every pore of his body divine Light pervades. This is the reality of human existence. I am stating the truth.

"Let him who wishes to hear my voice, listen to the Holy Scripture. The knowledge revealed in the Gurū's Word is the Wisdom of the Gurū. Let him who wishes to talk to me read the Holy Book: *Ādi Gurū Granth*. The Holy Book: *Ādi Gurū Granth*, is my image, my embodiment and my living Presence. Doubt it not in the least. Let him who seeks the grace and blessings of my Presence, get up early in the morning and take bath, and then go to the temple. There he should circumambulate thrice round the altar seat of the Holy Book and bow before it and sit in the divine Presence with utmost reverence and with folded hands: *hāth joṛ kar adab sion*. He should then attentively listen to the Word of the Scriptures. (9-16)

"A Sikh should listen to the Word of the Scriptures with utmost devotion. The Word is the Gurū; the source of divine knowledge and experience, which we should learn and teach. He who wishes to talk to me, let him study the *Ādi Gurū Granth* and learn and teach it. He who is eager to listen to my sermon, let him listen to the recitation of the scriptures, the Holy *Granth*. Know the *Ādi Granth* to be the spiritual embodiment. Doubt not this truth. (17-20)

"My third Personality is my true disciple (Gursikh), who is devoted to *Gurbāṇī*, (the Sacred Writings of the Gurūs) day and

night. A Sikh should have intense love for the Sacred Writings of the Gurū (Gurbāṇī) and should know the Word to be the Eternal Gurū. He should enjoy the divine Presence of the Gurū in this form of Eternal Word. (21-22)

"A Sikh should acquire the knowledge of the divine Word. He should listen to and recite the scriptures and hymns to others. He should recite the *Japujī* and *Jāpū* with utmost concentration and devotion. He should regularly visit the temple of the Gurū (Gurdwārā). A Sikh should not have any illegitimate relation with other person's wife. He should humbly serve true and devoted Sikhs of the Gurū, and remove all feelings of mine and thine from his mind. He who distinguishes himself by these acts of religious discipline, is an enlightened Sikh. Know him to be my own image and an embodiment of my true Spirit. (23-26)

"He who wishes to serve me with body, mind and soul, let him devotedly serve such a Sikh. The service and devotion to such a Sikh reaches me. Listen dear Naṇd Lāl, he who imbibes these virtues is liberated and attains the spiritual state."

Naṇd Lāl again asked, "Master, your Attributeless Form cannot be seen by everyone. A Sikh would be tempted to see you and seek you only in manifest physical form. How can we, Master, see your Attributeless Form within this world of attributes and material qualities. Your Formless Form is infinite. O World-Teacher, Lord of divine Wisdom, whose Light shines in every heart, reveals to us the secret of knowing thy Infinite Form."

Spake Gurū Gobīnd Singh: "Listen Bhāi Naṇd Lāl to my words. First, a Sikh should contemplate the living embodiment of the Gurū and then concentrate and meditate on the Word; the Name of God. To such a one shall be revealed, the mystery of the Eternal Spirit of the Gurū. He realizes the Infinite through inner communion with the Word, the Light of the Sikh blends with the Light of the Gurū's Eternal Personality." (27-36)

On the banks of the Satluj river (at Anaṇdpur), Gurū Gobīnd Singh delivered this sermon on the Sikh Code of Conduct to Naṇd

Lāl in the month of *Maghar* (November-December) in the year  
*Vikramī Samvat* 1752 (1695 A.D.):

Recite O Disciple 'Vāhigurū'  
Contemplate deeply 'Vāhigurū'  
Enshrine the Word in your heart,  
You shall attain spiritual liberation. (37-40).<sup>14</sup>

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Duncan Greenlees, *The Gospel of Gurū Granth Sāhib*, p. xxi.
2. *Ādi Gurū Granth, Rāga Āsā*, p. 448.
3. *Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Rām Dās, Rāga Sūhi*, p.757.
4. *Ādi Gurū Granth, Vār Bihāgrā*. 1: 16, p. 554.
5. Bhāi Gurdās, *Kabitt Sawaiye*, 470 - 490 are on this theme.
6. Ibid., *Vār*. 39, *Paurī*. 1.
7. Ibid., *Vār*. 11, *Paurī*. 3, *Vār*. 13, *Paurī*. 2.
8. Ibid., *Vār*. 40, *Paurī*. 11.
9. Ibid., *Vār*. 6, *Paurī*. 3.
10. Ibid., *Vār*. 40, *Paurī*. 11.
11. Ibid., *Vār*. 1, *Paurī*. 45, *Vār*. 18, *Paurī*. 14.
12. Ibid., *Vār*. 12, *Paurī*. 3.
13. *Japujī* (40 verses) is the composition of Gurū Nanak. *Japū* of 199 verses is the composition of Gurū Gobind Singh.
14. This translation is based on the text, I found in Bhāi Kāhan Singh's library at Nābhā, which his son Bhāi Bhagwant Singh Hartījī was kind enough to place at my disposal for study. There are other manuscripts available in some more libraries. All have the same date.

## CHAPTER 7

### GURŪ GOBĪND SINGH'S BAPTISM OF THE TWO-EDGED SWORD *KHANDE DĪ PĀHUL*

*main apnā sut tohī niwājā.*

*Pañthī parchur karbe kahū sājā.*

God sent me to this world giving this mandate:

"I have cherished and blessed You as My Son;

To create and organize a Universal Order of Faith,

I am sending you to the human world.

Go there, and establish Righteousness: *dharmā*,

And turn people away from the path of evil,"

I stood before His Majestic Presence,

And bowing my head in humble submission said:

"The Community of Righteous Faith can be established,

If You, O Lord, graciously help."

For this mission and task, I have come to the world:

To establish the Path of Righteousness,

The Almighty God has sent me to the human world.

He has commanded me to uphold freedom and justice everywhere;

To chastise tyrants and despots,

And annihilate their terror and tyranny.

Gurū Gobīnd Singh, *Bachitar Nāṭak*, Chapt. 6:29,42, p.57.

We have seen in the last chapter that after receiving the *Call*, Gurū Nānak had become supernally exalted with incomparable and perfect enlightenment, and he was determined to translate his new religious experience and mystic illumination into far-reaching thoughts and actions. During his travels he had



established his own centres in far flung places like Dāccā, Rāmeshwram, Ceylon and Baghdād, some of which were never visited by his successors. In his missionary journeys he wore Šūfī garb of *dervishes*, and when he visited the Hīmālayān regions and Tībet, he put on Tībetān robes. But after he settled at Kartārpur to institutionalize the Sikh Church, on which his successors built an autonomously working edifice, Gurū Nānak was determined to translate his new experiences and mystic illumination into far-reaching thoughts and actions. He was now ready to give the world, a new conception of synthetic and universal faith, based on realistically conceived social foundations and political consciousness.

The New Dispensation was then known as *Bābā Nānak dī Sikhī* or *Gurū Nānak kī Mārag*: the Path of Gurū Nānak. The Sikh Community was known as *Nānakpānthīs* or *Nānakprast*: Followers of Gurū Nānak's Path and Doctrines.<sup>1</sup> Gurū Nānak positively expressed in his sermons and writings that he was neither a Hindu nor a Muslim, neither a Yogī nor a Šūfī. Thus he left no room for being dubbed a Hindu or a Muslim Reformer. He did not permit even his disciples to accept any of the basic legal and institutional rites and laws of these two great religions, though he shared many of their universal ideas and experiences of higher realization. If a Brāhmin accepted Sikhism not as a lay follower but as an initiated disciple, he had to give up his sacred thread and everything associated with Brāhmaṇical rites and status, particularly the performance of *Vedic* rites and mode of worship. There were lay Muslim followers, but the initiated Muslim followers had to give up their formal commitments to *Šariat* (*Shari'a*). The lay followers from other faiths, both Hindu, Muslims and Buddhists, who were not initiated into the mystical and institutional life of Sikhism, were permitted to follow their traditional path and accept only the moral and spiritual benefits, which a lay follower was entitled to, through the blessings and compassion of disciplined apostles and saints of the Sikh faith. These lay followers are called *Nāmdharik*

Sikhs in the *Janam Sākhīs*, but after the creation of the *Khālsā* Holy Order they came to be known as *Sahajdhārī* Sikhs. Most of the *Sindhīs* who perform some Hindu rites and are devoted to some *Ṣūfī* saints also are generally *Sahajdhārī* Sikhs. Majority of the *Sindhī* *Sahajdhārī* Sikhs perform all their ceremonies according to Sikh rites and conduct all their services in *Gurdwārās* with exemplary devotion. To the general masses of other faiths *Gurū Nānak* said, "Be such a Hindu, be such a Muslim, Be such a *Vaiṣṇava*." He redefined these terms in the light of his own doctrines. When he settled down at *Kartārpur* to institutionalize his faith, he gave up his practice of wearing garb of holiness, without which he could not enter places of pilgrimages.<sup>2</sup> By wearing the common dress of a *Puñjābī* he tried to prove that any dress which is simple, clean and austere is good enough for a Saint, and Saintlike saintliness should be revealed through man's personality and actions.

Many non-Sikh scholars imagine that *Gurū Nānak* travelled all over the world unmindful of establishing any well outlined Faith. They think he was preaching an undefined religion of love: *Bhaktī*. These scholars conveniently ignore the fact that *Gurū Nānak* spent the last twenty years of his life to institutionalize his Faith and Doctrines. During this period he gave them Book of Hymns: *Pothī*,<sup>3</sup> three daily prayers; *Japuṛī*, *Rehirās* and *Kīrtan Sohilā*, and the initiation ceremony.

The Word of God became the spiritual personality of the *Gurū*, which transcended his physical and historical person even during his lifetime.<sup>4</sup> *Gurū Nānak*, thus, laid the foundation of New Faith: (i) By channelizing his spiritual experiences and imparting them to initiate through the *Charan-pāhul Amrit*: Baptism of the *Gurū's* Lotus Feet; (ii) By imparting a new *Guru-mantra*: Mystic Word to his disciples at the time of initiation; (iii) By giving to his followers new prayers, such as *Japuṛī* (Morning Prayer), *Rehirās* (Evening Prayer), and *Sohilā Ārtī* (Bed-time Prayer). These three prayers still form the three of the seven basic daily prayers of a

Sikh: *Nitnem*; (iv) By giving to his disciples new Code of Conduct, new rites and ceremonies, thus establishing a complete break with Vedic and Brāhmanical ceremonies.

Differing on many points from other faiths, Gurū Nānak avoided sectarian confrontation, but he not only welcomed theological discussions in a polite and courteous manner, but provoked a dialogue which gave him opportunity to clearly enunciate his own system of philosophy in the terminology of prevailing religious and philosophical systems. Gurū Nānak's compositions like *Siddha Gosfī*, *Om̐kār*, *Ārtī*, *Āsā di Vār*, are clear examples of his exposition of Sikh doctrines and its distinctive features. He also outlines the areas of common mystical experiences at the highest stage of union with God. He severely criticises the *Tāntric* cults as *Sākta Mat*, and considers them most dangerous for genuine moral and spiritual life. The Gurū emphasized on the centrality of man; social, political and cultural freedoms, of which he is deprived by society and ambitious rulers. In his writings we find a severe criticism of the cruelty and terror perpetuated by the Afghāns and the Mughals. He was of the firm opinion that no religious man should ever submit to oppression and exploitation of any kind.

Kabīr, Nāmdev and other medieval saints suffered a great deal at the hands of tyrannical rulers, but we do not find a single word of protest in their writings against cruelty, which they and the masses suffered during their times. Gurū Nānak did not ignore the suffering of the people. He vigorously condemned the invasion of Bābur and the terror, the Mughals tried to strike in Emnābād and Lāhore. He also condemned the Afghān rulers saying, "The age is like a drawn sword, the kings are butchers, decency and virtues have taken wings."<sup>5</sup>

#### ANNUAL GATHERING OF BAISĀKHĪ: NEW YEAR DAY AND THE MISSIONARY ORDER OF THE MASANDS

Pāro Julkā was one of the prominent missionaries of Gurū Amar

Dās. He had acquired such an exalted spiritual state and such a high moral status by virtue of his holiness and inner illumination that Gurū Amar Dās addressed him as *Paramhaṇsa*. One day Paramhaṇsa Pāro Julkā suggested that Sikhs from all over the country should come to the Gurū on a particular day, and this auspicious day should be an occasion for national cultural gatherings of the Sikh community. This remarkable suggestion of Pāro Julkā was atonce accepted by Gurū Amar Dās, who fixed *Baisākhī* as the annual cultural gathering day of the Sikh Community, which generally fell in the last week of March in those days.<sup>6</sup>

From that year onwards Baisākhī became significant for the following purposes: First, novices and new devotees were baptized. Secondly, it was an opportunity to meet the Gurū, seek his personal guidance on problems that troubled their minds. Thirdly, the mingling of the people from different States, different races, castes, creeds and colour, and speaking different languages in one all-embracing spiritual brotherhood was a unique cultural phenomenon, which shocked both orthodox Hindus and Muslims, when they saw bitterly antagonistic cultures blending into one worship and spiritual humanism.

Gurū Amar Dās organized missionary work on a sound footing. In 22 dioceses (*Mañjīs*) corresponding to the 22 states of the Mughal Emperor, he appointed 146 well-trained Missionaries, out of which 94 were men, while 52 were women. Never in the history of India had women been given such august position and power. The whole of Kashmīr and Kābul were under Women Provincial Heads. Gurū Amar Dās introduced such radical social reforms "that he struck at the very roots of the influence of the Hindu priestly class, and though in such a matter, where long standing customs of cherished practices were concerned, success must necessarily have been slow, the ball had been set rolling, and Sikhism put on the way of gradual disassociation from Hinduism."<sup>7</sup>

Gurū Amar Dās fought against the cruel custom of *Satī* and did

not allow any woman to be burnt with her husband. He even encouraged widow marriage and opposed *Purdāh* system. These Missionaries were called *Masañds* or *Masnads*, which in Arabic means, One belonging to the King's Throne, or Envoy of the Gurū. They were given full authority to preach, except initiating disciples. Considerable authority was given to them. But they were not given two powers: (i) they could not use the tithes (offering of the disciples), they had collected without the express permission of the Gurū, (ii) they were supposed to teach and inspire seekers of truth and religious experiences and prepare them as novices for Sikhism, but they were not supposed to initiate or baptize them in any way. They were instructed to lead a simple life and serve people with humility and not exploit their devotion and piety through delegated authority. During the time of Gurū Hargobind corruption crept into this missionary system. The third generation of these *Masañds* began to take advantage of the political situation in the Puñjāb.

THE SWORD OF *Mirī*: POLITICAL SOVEREIGNTY AND  
THE SWORD OF *Pirī*: SPIRITUAL SOVEREIGNTY

Foreseeing the end of Akbar's reign of tolerance and peace, Gurū Arjan trained his son in the use of arms and employed in his *durbār* many seasoned warriors. All Sikhs who were working in the Mughal army were asked to leave the service of the Mughals and join Hargobind in raising the first Sikh army. When Gurū Arjan was tortured to death by Jahāngir's orders, and the conspiracy of Hindu and Muslim enemies of the Gurū in Mughal court succeeded, Gurū Hargobind on succeeding him donned two swords. He called one, the Sword of *Pirī*: the Sword of Spiritual Sovereignty and he called the other, the Sword of *Mirī*: the Sword of Political Sovereignty. This indicates that the sword as a symbol of spiritual sovereignty was already there, and the Gurūs asserted it by their distinct school of thought and refusal to be subservient to any other religious tradition. Its integrity, its path, its dynamic

individuality was to be swordlike, and from this day onward Sikhism became a religion with two swords in its hands; the sword of spiritual sovereignty and the sword of political sovereignty, which kept the Sikhs free from fear of political sovereignty under all alien rulers. Gurū Hargobīnd passed on this sword to all his successors as it had become a part of spiritual Regalia of Gurūship, and Gurū Gobīnd Singh as we shall see, passed it on to the Khālsā.

The Masaṇds of the third generation now took advantage of the difficulties, which the Gurū had to encounter because of the political situation. His cousin and some other members of the Gurū's family had set up parallel leadership and gurūship, which ultimately collapsed, and the Masaṇds either shifted loyalty, or some of them started initiating disciples and keeping the tithes for themselves. At this juncture Gurū Hargobīnd issued letters to the Sikhs saying that only those taking baptism from the Gurū were genuine Sikhs; those baptized by the Masaṇds would not be recognized as ordained Sikhs. Those baptized by the Gurū began to be called the Khālsā. The Word Khālsā in Mughal court terminology meant "Land owned by the King." So the Sikhs who were baptized by the Gurū were owned by him, while those baptized by the Masaṇds were disowned by him. This term was used for all those baptized by the New Ceremony of the Double-Edged Sword, introduced by Gurū Gobīnd Singh.

#### THE BAISĀKHĪ OF MARCH 1699 A.D.

For the first 24 years of his ministry Gurū Gobīnd Singh continued to baptize Sikhs according to the *Charan Pāhul* Ceremony, already described. But on the Baisākhī of March 29, 1699 A.D.<sup>8</sup> (Wednesday) when thousands of people had come from far and near and assembled at Anāṇdpur to be received and blessed by the Gurū, a strange thing happened. Suddenly the Gurū drew his sword, looked very fierce and demanded. "If there is any true Sikh, let him give to his Gurū his head."<sup>9</sup> Let him who is really devoted

to me as a disciple prove it by offering his head. One disciple Dayā Rām, a Kaśatriyā of Lāhore stood up and offered his head. He was taken into a tent, pitched far away, and the Gurū came out with his sword dripping with blood. The eminent Tāmīl poet Subrāmānium Bhārati has vividly and realistically portrayed the dramatic happenings of this Baisākhi:

Suddenly on the royal platform  
 Stood a figure, luminous  
 In youth, strength and splendour.  
 His eyes blew divine flame,  
 A halo surrounded his head.  
 In his upraised arm, a sharp sword  
 Belching fire, terrible to behold;  
 Like a horde of lions immobilized  
 Before a magician from above,  
 Seeing him, the numberless men  
 Fell silent, and bowed their head.

Heralded by the flashing sword,  
 The Son of God opened his lips,  
 To unveil his inmost thoughts,  
 And volcanic words erupted:  
 I wish to plunge this sword  
 Into the heart of man;  
*Dharma* thirsts for sacrificial blood.

A hero issued out and said,  
 Gem of Gurūs! I shall die by Sword,  
 To quench dharma's thirst,  
 Thy blessings! Accept my offering!

A Second hero advanced to meet  
 The challenge. Taking him inside  
 The Gurū made the sacrifice.  
 This ordeal by Gurū Gobind Singh

Was the origin of The Khālsā;  
 The Way of the Illuminated Select.  
 Like the Creator who out of five elements  
 Built the world, shining Khālsā too  
 Was founded with five warriors.  
 Dharma prospered, tyrant's might trembled.  
 Goddess Freedom smiled.  
*Vikramī*: Seventeen Fifty-six, (1699 A.D.).  
 In the convened assembly sat  
 Gurū Gobīnd Singh on regal throne,  
 A sight for gods.  
 A new life began for Bhārat.  
 The disciples all took *dīkhsā*  
 A sign of consecration.  
 And the Gurū said: "Dear Ones,  
 Nectar is the *dīkhsā* you have taken.  
 You are the strong ones with unshorn head."

The pledge of the iron band,  
 The austere undergarment and the sword,  
 No king for you. God is your King.  
 The Rule of Divine Law is the only Law,  
 The wrong doing your enemy.

Gurū Gobīnd Singh's flag fluttered,  
 High above: the world cheered.  
 The beginning of the end  
 Of Aurangzeb's reign.

Subrāmānium Bhārati  
 Tr: by Dr Premā Nāndakumār.

The first of offer his head was Dayā Rām, son of Bhāī Suddhā and Māī Diālī, a Ksātrīyā family from Lāhore. The second who came forward was Dharam Dās, son of Sant Rām and Māī Sābho of Hastināpur (U.P), a Jāt family devoted to the Gurū. The third was Himmat Rāi, son of Joytī Rām and Māī Rāmo, a lowly *dhībar*



caste (cooks and washermen) from Jagan Nāth Purī in Orissā. The fourth was Mohkam Chañd, son of Tirath Rām and Mātā Sukhdevī from Dwārkā in Kāthiāwār, who was tailor by profession. The fifth was Sāhib Chañd son of Tulsī Nāi (Chaman Rām) and Biśandevī from Bidar in central India, who was barber by profession. Thus four of the five who offered their heads came from what were known as low caste people.<sup>10</sup> Everyone was surprised when they were brought out of the enclosure very much alive and dressed like the Master, donning swords and having royal dignity like him. "These are my Five Beloved Elect (*Pañj Piārās*)", he said. They have offered their head to me in body and spirit, and they shall be the embodiments to my body and Spirit, just as Arigad was of Gurū Nānak. My Spirit shall ever reside in the *Pañj Piārās*. Whenever there are *Pañj Piārās* (Five Disciplined *Khālsā*) assembled in spiritual communion, there we not only see, we spiritually perceive the Eternal Spirit of Gurū Gobiñd Singh.

#### BAPTISM OF THE TWO-EDGED SWORD:

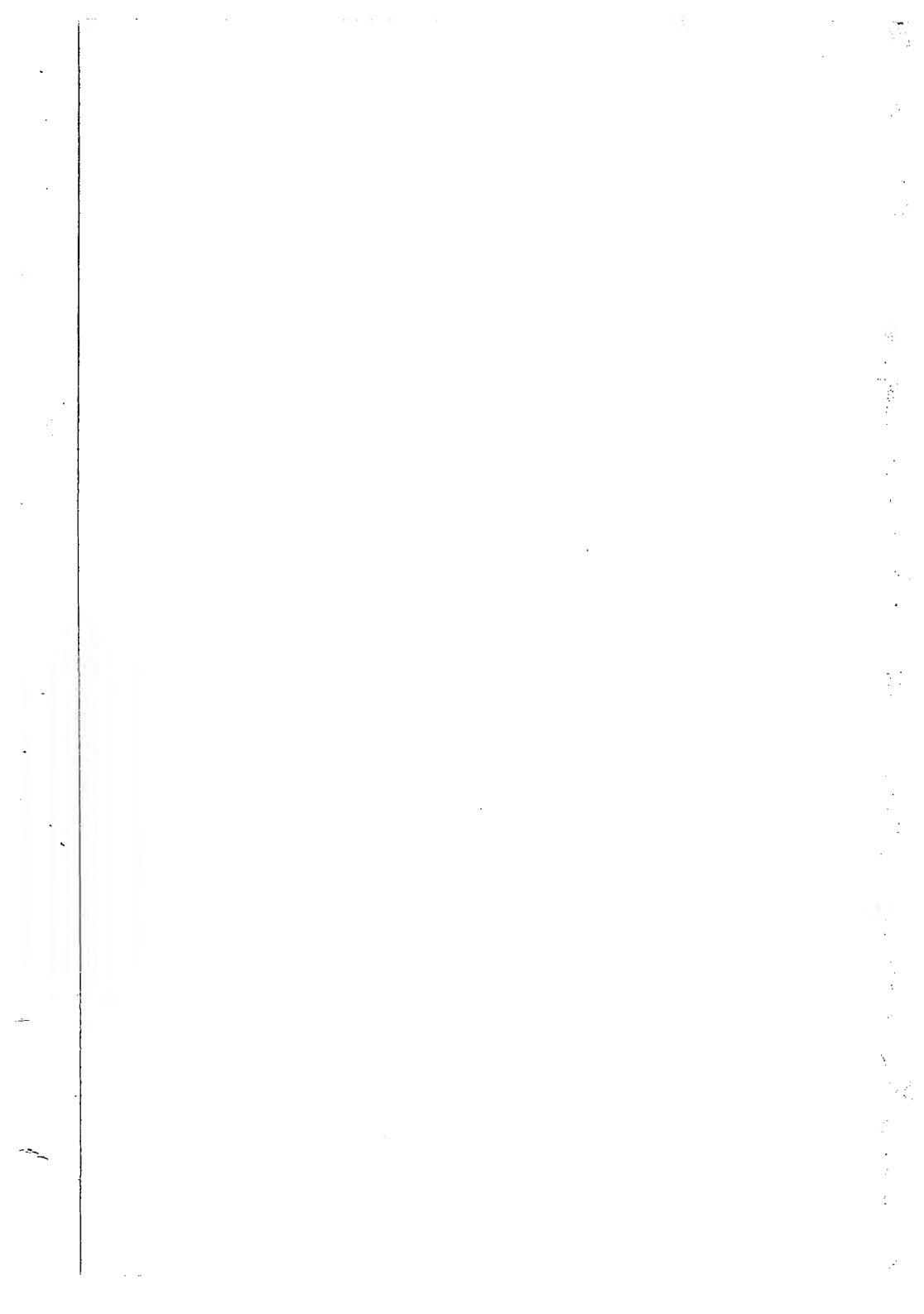
##### *KHANDE DĪ PĀHUL*

Gurū Gobiñd Singh first took a vessel full of water and performed the Charan Pāhul Ceremony of Sikh baptism in it. He then sealed the vessel and ordered that it should be buried deep on the banks of the Satluj river, indicating that he had performed the ceremony for the last time in it, and he declared that this ceremony should not be performed by anyone again. It ceased to be the baptism ceremony from that day.<sup>11</sup>

Gurū Gobiñd Singh then took an iron bowl made of shining steel and filled it with water. The Holy Mother, Mātā Sāhib Devī poured into it sugar cubes (*patāsās*) at the request of Bābā Gurbakhsh Singh (Rām Koer), a descendent of Bābā Buḍḍhā and the High Priest of the Gurū's Court. Gurū Gobiñd Singh then took a Two-Edged Sword, and concentrating his attention in deep meditation, he stirred the water with the Two-Edged Sword. While doing so he recited five prayers: *Japuḍi* of Gurū Nānak, the *Jāpū*



THEATRE ROYAL DE LA VILLE DE BRUXELLES  
LE 10 MARS 1904  
LA FEMME EN SABLE  
Mlle. de la Roche  
M. de la Roche





Prage (Prague) - Prague, 1900. The group of men in traditional attire.



and *Sawāīye* (Ten from *Akāl Ustāṭī*) and *Kabio-bāch Bentī Chaupāī*, all three compositions of Gurū Gobīnd Singh, and *Anandī Sāhib* by Gurū Amar Dās.

These five compositions now are the five morning prayers of a Sikh. When the baptismal water was ready, he offered it to each of the Five Elect to drink once by turn, signifying that they were brothers in form, mind and spirit. Five times it was sprinkled in the eyes, which lifted their veils of darkness and gave them spiritual perception and insight. Five times it was poured on the crest of the head: the Seat of Tenth Consciousness. This unveiled to them the Transcendent State of the Divine Being in their higher consciousness, known as *Turiyā avasthā*: Fourth State. The baptism for them was a real rebirth into a new consciousness and new spirit.

Then Gurū Gobīnd Singh imparted the *Gurū-mantra*, and thereby gave them His Light and inner illumination. The Gurū-mantra, also known as the divine Name or *Śabad* of the Gurū was the key to their inner life, the essence of all their contemplations and meditations. Thus Gurū Gobīnd Singh changed the Five Chosen Ones into a New Embodiment of his own Personality. He called them the *Khālsā*: the Enlightened and the Pure; the Elect of the Gurū; the Living Embodiments of the Apostolic grace and Light of God. He then imparted to them the basic Sikh Code of Conduct, which was to be imparted orally through this mystical ceremony from generation to generation. When some ignorant people started creating misunderstanding about them, then the Gurū's contemporaries recorded some of the Codes of Conduct called the *Rehītnāmās*.

#### THE GURŪ BECAME THE DISCIPLE AND THE DISCIPLE BECAME THE GURŪ

True to the tradition and example set by earlier Gurū's of raising the disciple to the status of Gurūship and himself becoming his disciple, Gurū Gobīnd Singh not only changed these disciples morally and spiritually, but elevated their spiritual dignity and

authority above his own by bowing before them and asking them to baptize him with the Two-edged Sword exactly as he had baptized them. Taken aback by the Gurū's humility and eagerness to raise the status of the New Dispensation to the highest and the most exalted ceremony, they offered baptism to Gurū Gobīnd Singh. The Word "Singh" was to be the surname of the whole Khālsā Brotherhood, and Gurū Gobīnd Singh changed his own name from Gobīnd Dās to Gobīnd Singh. He was also known earlier as Gobīnd Rāi (King Gobīnd). But the Sikhs call him *Sachā Pātshāh* Gurū Gobīnd Singh. The term *Sachā Pātshāh* (True King) was used for earlier Gurūs also. This Brotherhood was to live as One Universal Community, as One Spiritual Family with God as their only Deity to be worshipped, and Gurū Gobīnd Singh as their Father and Mātā Sāhib Devī as their Mother. All authority of the Masaṇds was taken away.<sup>12</sup> Five Sikhs, baptized with the Two-Edged Sword, could turn out corrupt Masaṇds, and with the help of Sikh congregation could take far reaching decisions."

#### BRĀHMINs AND HINDU RĀJĀS PROTEST

Shortly after the establishment of the Khālsā Holy Order, a Brāhmin visited Anandpur with many of his followers. He was shocked to find low caste people treated as equals and also taught Sanskrit and other forbidden studies. He felt insulted for being ignored and treated like ordinary visitors and not given privileged treatment. He lodged a strong protest, and in the presence of Gurū Gobīnd Singh cursed and condemned outright what he called the low-caste rabble; the Sikhs, who were treated better than the Brāhmin and Kśatriyās. Gurū Gobīnd Singh calmly replied, "Do not blame me for ignoring you, for all are equal in my eyes. I will send you the bedding and other things you need, but do not say a word against my Beloved Elect; the Khālsā, my devoted Sikhs."<sup>13</sup> Then glorifying the Sikhs people who were condemned by Kesho Dutt, the Brāhmin, as low caste rabble, he said:

*judh jite inhā ke prasādi*

*inhā ke prasādi su dān kare.*

All the battles I have won against tyranny,  
 I have fought with the devoted backing of these people.  
 Through them only, have I been able to bestow gifts.  
 Through their help, I have escaped harm.  
 The love and generosity of the Sikhs  
 Have enriched my heart and home.  
 Through their grace, I have acquired all learning,  
 Through their help in battles, I have slain the enemies,  
 I was born to serve them; through them, I reached eminence.  
 What would I have been without their kind and ready help?  
 There are millions of insignificant people like me.  
 True service is the service of the people,  
 I am not inclined to serve others of higher castes.  
 Charity will bear fruit in this and the next world.  
 If given to such worthy people as these,  
 All other sacrifices and charity are profitless.  
 From head to foot, whatever I call my own,  
 All I possess or carry, I dedicate to these people."

*Dasam Granth, Gurū Gobind Singh, Śabad. 2,3, p.716.*

Gurū Gobind Singh wrote this unique "Song of the People," glorifying their innate strength and power nearly sixty years before Rousseau wrote his *Social Contract* and about 150 years before Karl Marx formulated his *Manifesto*. It shows his great conviction and faith in the innate strength and democratic Will of the morally awakened masses. From this great ideal of socializing moral, spiritual and cultural power, Sikhism became a great force and cultural power. This Song, and Gurū Gobind Singh's New Social and Religious Order sounded the death knell of Brāhminism, caste prejudices within Sikhism at least. He severed once for all the cultural dominance of one caste and one class, and wherever and whenever Sikhism operates as a living force, it will resist vehemently the caste and class dominance of Brāhmins, Kṣātriyās, Sōdhis, Bedis, and now Jāts and other political classes.



Gurū Gobīnd Singh further writes, "The Brāhmin on hearing this was ablaze with malice and started burning in wrath just as the dry grass burns in fire."<sup>14</sup> And this attitude of malice, and subtle but bitter opposition of all that is most precious to Sikhism, has been persistent among the bigoted Hindus, conscious of their Brāhminical superiority by the divine right of birth throughout centuries.

On the other hand liberal Hindus believing and understanding *Sanātan Dharam* (not Āryā Samājists, who for a century have opposed the Sikhs on all issues just for the sake of running them down) have always taken genuine pride in the service, the Sikhs have rendered to their religion by defending it against oppression and tyranny a number of times in history. Many Hindu families in the Puñjāb permitted one member of their family to become an ordained *Khālsā*. This was encouraged by the eminent Sanātan Dharma leader, Paṇḍit Madan Mohan Mālviyā, but opposed and discouraged by Mahātamā Gāndhī, who even went to the extent of insulting Gurū Gobīnd Singh by calling him "misguided patriot."<sup>15</sup> But the hate campaign which Āryā Samāj papers and organizations carried in their press and on their platforms against Sikhs, Muslims and Christians, changed the atmosphere of amity and understanding to one of bitter communalism. The Akālī reaction to this hate campaign was the Sikh hate campaign against the Hindus of the type, which neither the Sikhs nor Sikhism has tolerated. But in the decadent political atmosphere that has prevailed in the Puñjāb, the Sikhs have not only tolerated, but the process of degeneration has given rise to leadership in Akālī Dal, which is as materialistic and atheistic in practice as the Communist and as ignorant about the basic values of Sikhism as an opponent of Sikhism.

The Hindu Rājās of Śivālik Hills were also willing to accept the New Baptism of Gurū Gobīnd Singh, provided they were baptized separately and not along with men of low caste. Gurū Gobīnd Singh refused saying, "Baptism was one and it was for men and

women of all castes, colour, and status. They shall have to get it along with other novices, no matter from which class and caste they come. There would never be discrimination of nationality, caste or colour in baptism."

### REASONS FOR INTRODUCING BAPTISM WITH TWO-EDGED SWORD

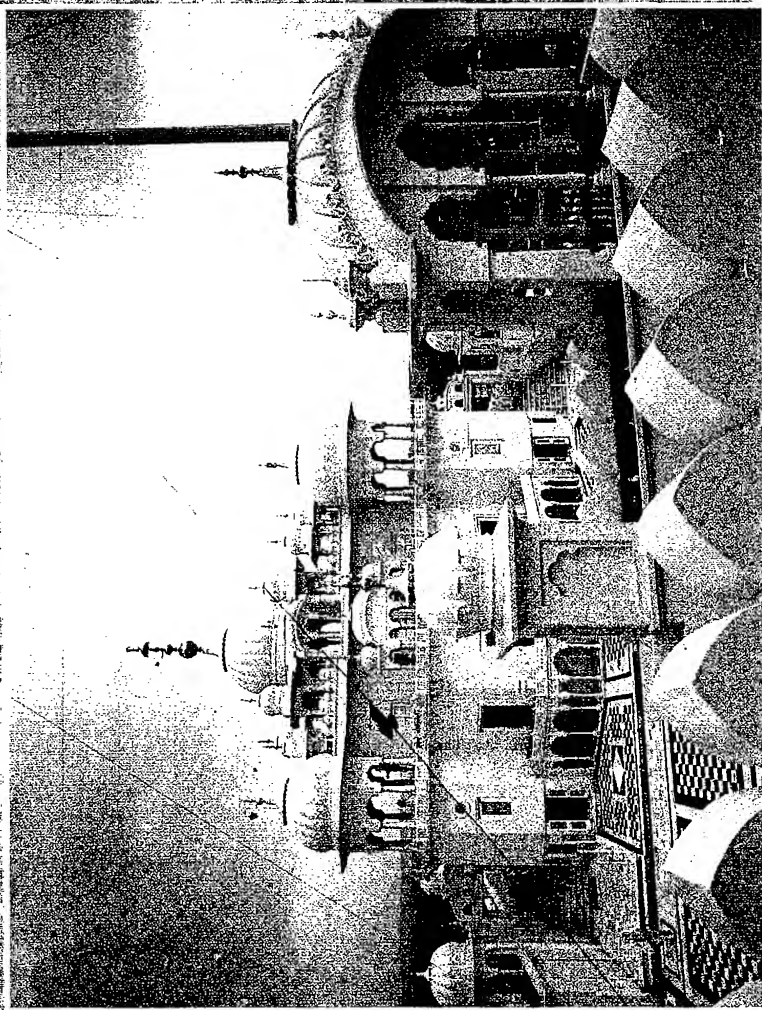
Two reasons are generally given for Gurū Gobīnd Singh's intentions of creating the Khālsā Holy Order. One by some nineteenth century chroniclers and the other by some non-Sikh scholars who just glance at some facts of Sikh history, accept them without checking their authenticity and then write self-styled authoritative books on Sikhism with the idea of misleading the non-Sikhs, who know very little about Sikhism. These ignorant or wilfully prejudiced writers want to present the thesis that Gurū Gobīnd Singh completely departed from his predecessors, particularly Gurū Nānak. They wish to present the religion of Gurū Gobīnd Singh as something distinct from the religion of Gurū Nānak, its Founder. Both these theories are based on ignorance of the basic facts of Sikh history, theology and cultural development, and are untenable.

Some nineteenth century historians have given the story that when Gurū Tegh Bahādur was beheaded in Chāndnī Chowk by the orders of Aurangzeb, no one came to claim the Gurū's body. Every Sikh went into hiding. Gurū Gobīnd Singh is alleged to have been upset by such a behaviour of the Sikhs. So he decided to create the New Khālsā Holy Order, which could not conceal its conspicuous personality.

The very suggestion that no one came forward to claim the body of Gurū Tegh Bahādur is historically incorrect. The Sikhs performed such a heroic deed that day that there are few parallels in the history of the world. It is the first instance of such a courage, where the body of the great martyr was well-guarded by armed men of the Mughal police force, right in the heart of the Capital

and only a thousand yards from the Red Fort and Jāmā Masjid areas; the busiest and most well sensitively guarded areas of Delhī. The Sikhs carried away the body and the head of the martyred Gurū in two separate attempts made within hours of the martyrdom. Not a single Sikh involved in these daring feats could either be arrested or punished in any way. All the three companions of Gurū Tegh Bahādur: Dayāl Dās, Matī Dās and Satī Dās were tortured to death. The Mughal authorities were confounded and terribly shaken by these heroic feats. *Maāsir-i-Ālamgiri*, whose author is called dishonest by Maulānā Azād for not even mentioning the beheading of Šūfī Saint Sarmad and later Gurū Tegh Bahādur, mentions two incidents of disciples of Gurū Tegh Bahādur, who made two daring attempts to assassinate Aurangzeb single-handedly. "While the Emperor was mounting his horse in the square (*chauk*) before the Hall of Audience, a Complainer flung a stick at him. It fell on the other side of His Majesty's umbrella; the man was made over to the *Kotwāl*." "On Friday, October 27, 1676 A.D. while the Emperor was returning from the Jāmā Masjid (Mosque) and had alighted from the boat in order to mount the movable chair (*takhat-i-rawān*), an ill-fated disciple of Gurū Tegh Bahādur threw two bricks, one of which reached the chair. He was seized by the retinue, and ordered to be made over to *Kotwāl*."<sup>16</sup> So the very historical content of the story is wrong.

Secondly, if Gurū Gobind Singh felt in 1675 A.D. that the prime need of the hour was the creation of the *Khālsā* Holy Order, which could be conspicuous in everyway, why did he wait for 24 years to do so? Thirdly, if he did create the *Khālsā* to make it militarily more efficient, why did he do so when he had already fought 15 battles and won nearly all of them? Why was the *Khālsā* created just nine years before he was to leave this world and only five or six years before he left Anandpur for ever? The *Khālsā* had to be created for other reasons, particularly when the *Masānds* not only started concealing their identity as Gurū Gobind Singh's





followers, but were also indulging in a number of corrupt practices.

During the Mughal rule all Buddhist and Hindu-Jain faiths of non-violence were mercilessly trampled under foot. All the proverbial heroism of Rājapūts and Marāthās as saviour of Hindu religion and culture not only collapsed, but became subservient to Mughal rule and tyranny. Gurū Gobīnd Singh and his Khālsā alone stood firmly against Aurangzeb's despotism and his policy of eliminating other religious cultures.

Even today during the times of wars with Pakistan and other aggressors, Gurū Gobīnd Singh becomes the ideal of the Delhi rulers, more to induce the Sikhs to shed their blood, and is propagated as the greatest prophet from the time of *Rg Veda* to the present day, but as soon as these wars are over, Gurū Gobīnd Singh is forgotten, the Khālsā becomes suspect. The Sikh Generals are thrown into oblivion and denied legitimate promotions to the highest posts, and the whole Sikh community becomes suspect. The most legitimate demands of the Sikhs are denied. Matters are made worst by a worthless leadership, whose selfishness and flights from responsibility tempts them to surrender to such forces.

The Sikh Community always feels that the Living and Eternal Presence of Gurū Gobīnd Singh, their Father and Saviour, is ever with them and through a process of inner germination and regeneration of the Will of the Gurū's grace and spirit, he continuously gives them power, self-confidence and grace of divine protection. They are firmly anchored in their historic destiny, visualized and inspired by Gurū Gobīnd Singh, and they know that the sun will never set on them. For us Gurū Nānak was Gurū Gobīnd Singh and Gurū Gobīnd Singh was Gurū Nānak. Gurū Gobīnd Singh himself made this amply clear when he wrote:

*Nānak Aṅgad ko bapū dharā.  
dharam parchūrī ih jag mo karā.*

The Light and Spirit of Gurū Nānak  
Was infused in the body of Gurū Aṅgad,

Who developed the Master's *Pañth* in abundance.  
Then Gurū Nānak's apostolic Spirit  
Came to be known as Amar Dās.  
It was a unique spiritual transfiguration,  
One resplendent Lamp lighting another lamp.

Only the enlightened saints  
Understand this phenomenon,  
Ignorant fools cannot comprehend it.  
When the time for prophetic bequest came,  
The crown of Apostolic sovereignty  
Was bestowed on Rām Dās of Sodhī family;  
This distinguished scion of Sodhī family  
Thus received the Light of Gurū Nānak,  
As predicted in the ancient prophecy,  
Amar Dās departed to the heavenly Abode.  
The Enlightened seers know that  
Srī Nānak's Spirit was embodied in Aṅgad.  
The Light of Aṅgad was recognized in Rām Dās.

Foolish and ignorant persons  
Consider all Sikh Gurūs to be different,  
From one another in mind and Spirit.  
Few enlightened saints and seers  
Know them to be one in inner being and Spirit.  
Only those who understand this essential Truth  
Acquire spiritual enlightenment and perfection.  
Without understanding this phenomena  
One cannot achieve any perfection on this Path.

*Dasam Granth,*

Gurū Gobind Singh, *Bachitar Nāṭak*, Chapt. 5:7-10, p.54.

Bhāi Naṇd Lāl affirms this oneness of thought and Spirit of all  
ten Gurūs thus:

*hamū Nānak asto hamū Aṅgad ast*  
*hamū Amardās afzalo amjad ast.*

He who is Nānak is also Aṅgad  
 He is also Amar Dās;  
 Most Excellent in virtues and learning.  
 He is also Rām Dās,  
 He is also Arjan,  
 He is also Hargobiṇd;  
 Merciful, Bountiful, Most Excellent.  
 He is also Hari Rāi;  
 To whom was revealed  
 The exterior and interior of everyone.  
 He is also Hari Krishan,  
 Who is held high in divine dignity.  
 He removed the sorrow  
 Of every afflicted plaintive.  
 He is Gurū Tegh Bahadūr,  
 From whose Light was manifest  
 The divine Gurū Gobiṇd Singh.  
 He is Gurū Gobiṇd Singh,  
 Who verily is Nānak.  
 The Divine Word (*Śabad*) of the Gurūs  
 Are precious jewels and pearls.

Bhāi Naṇd Lāl, *Jot Bigās* (Per), 23-30.

Kavī Saināpati, another court poet of Gurū Gobiṇd Singh  
 writes in *Gur Sobhā Granth* of spiritual and mystical oneness of all  
 the Gurūs.

You are Gurū Nānak, You are Gurū Aṅgad.  
 You are Gurū Amar Dās, You are Gurū Rām Dās.  
 You are Gurū Arjan, You are Gurū Hargobiṇd.  
 You are Gurū Hari Rāi, Hari Krishan also you are.  
 The ninth Gurū in this dark *kālī* age.  
 Controlled His spiritual powers.  
 You are Tegh Bahadūr.  
 Who covered the shame of the country  
 By becoming a protective Sheet (*chāddar*) of all.  
 You are the tenth Master, Gurū Gobiṇd Singh,



You have come, Lord, as a Saviour of the World.  
 You are glorified O Tēgh Bahadūr  
 In all the three worlds.  
 You have saved the honour of the destitute,  
 And given protection to  
 The *tilak*, the sacred thread and the temples of Hindus.  
 Mercifully you have immortalized your sacrifice.  
 For *dharma* (righteousness) you went to heaven,  
 Gobiṇd Singh became the Gurū thereafter.

Kavī Saināpati, *Gur Sobhā Granth*, 1:12-16

*Parchān Sewā Dās*, another contemporary record, also highlights this spiritual and mystical oneness of all the Gurūs.<sup>17</sup>

What then, were the real reasons for Ordaining the *Khālsā*? We find the answer in the writings of Gurū Gobiṇd Singh and his contemporary poets. The following were the main reasons which impelled Gurū Gobiṇd Singh to ordain the *Khālsā* Holy Order, nine years before his death. Eight or nine years were quite sufficient to discipline the *Khālsā* Holy Order in Code of Conduct and make it self-reliant and self-dependent.

#### DIVINE WILL AND COMMAND OF GOD TO CREATE A COMMUNITY OF RIGHTEOUS MEN

We have already quoted from Gurū Gobiṇd Singh's Auto-biography, in which he clearly states that God had sent him to continue the mission of Gurū Nānak and take it to the culmination point of creating a *Pañth* (A Nation) of righteous men. God commanded him to create a self-sufficient and autonomous community of righteous men.

#### TO UPHOLD THE RELIGIOUS, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL INTEGRITY OF THE SIKH PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD

The religious movements of Kabīr, Nāmdev and other Saints suffered virtual extinction, because within these movements there was no organizational structure which could defend them from

being eliminated or absorbed either by Hindu orthodoxy or Mughal and Afghān fanaticism. The battles, these great Saints fought against religious and social corruption and some new ideas of higher mysticism could not be carried on by their successors at any level. Even their works could not be properly preserved, and got mixed up with much that was not written by them. We know of no great disciple of these saints who made a positive effort to carry their message in the form, they wished to give. The Sikh Gurūs were conscious of the fate of these *Bhakti* movements and *Šūfi* movements. So they built a chain of institutions to preserve permanently, what they had built in ten generations. Organization of the *Khālsā* Holy Order was the culminating point and the epitome of these Institutions, which was to be the unshakeable Rock Foundation of the Faith and the Iron Citadel to protect it from all internal and external dangers. It was to be self-sufficient and self-corrective Organization wedded to the Eternal Spirit and Grace of God and the Prophets.

#### TO UPHOLD HUMAN RIGHTS AND FIGHT TYRANTS AND DESPOTS

Gurū Gobind Singh clearly states in his Autobiography *Bachittar Nāṭak* that God sent him to create a *Panṭh* (Universal Community), which would uphold continuously in history the highest human and spiritual values and the best traditions of freedom and human dignity. It is for this he sacrificed his father and it is for this he sacrificed his four sons. This interpretation of his mission is further supported by contemporary poets of Gurū Gobind Singh's court like Saināpati and Bhāi Nānd Lāl.

#### TO ELIMINATE THE MASAND MISSIONARY SYSTEM

We have noticed that the Sikh missionaries known as the Masands had started misusing the authority delegated to them by the Gurūs. They had, by the time of Gurū Gobind Singh, become thoroughly greedy and corrupt and notoriously dangerous for the very existence of Sikhism. In his historically important

composition which originally was the first Rehitnāmā written by Gurū Gobind Singh, the Gurū gives the definition of the Khālsā and throws considerable light on the Sikh Code of Conduct. We find very angry comments on the Masaṇds by Gurū Gobind Singh:

*jo karī sev masandan kī kahai*

*ānī prasādi sabai mohi deejai.*

Whoever offers to serve the Masaṇds

They tell him: Come offer everything

And all your gifts to us

For seeking blessing and favours of God.

Whatever money you have in your house

Bring it immediately and offer it to us.

Day and night concentrate on our holy person.

Even in error do not think of any other,

Except our name and holy presence.

As soon as they are asked to help the poor and needy

They run away from the place shunning charity.

Nothing else pleases these Masaṇds

Except cheating and looting innocent Sikhs.

In their eyes the Masaṇds put oil

To make tears roll down their cheeks,

In their hypocritical postures

To weep like unworldly saints for God.

When they see a rich Sikh,

They serve him with delicious food.

But when they see a poor Sikh

They offer him no hospitality.

When a poor Sikh even begs for food,

They spurn him and turn their face away.

These Masaṇds; these rapacious animals,

Only loot and plunder innocent Sikhs,

They never contemplate and glorify God.

*Dasam Granth*, Gurū Gobind Singh, *Teti Sawāīye*. 29, 30, pp.715-16.

Thus Gurū Gobind Singh vividly portrays the character of

these Masaṇds and indicts them of treachery, hypocrisy and exploitation of the poor people. How sensitive were the feelings of Gurū Gobīnd Singh for the humble and poor, and how bitterly he hated and condemned those who exploited them in the name of religion or secular authority, can clearly be seen from these and other writings of Gurū Gobīnd Singh. These verses also show that the Masaṇds system, which had been organized by Gurū Amar Dās, had become very corrupt and Gurū Gobīnd Singh was determined to eliminate it.

After the Khālsā was ordained, Gurū Gobīnd Singh issued letters that any Five Sikhs of the Khālsā Holy Order could take action against any Masaṇd and turn him out of the religious centre. But he repeatedly asks the Khālsā to be compassionate and forgive those who show repentance. Authority from all individuals acting as dictatorial missionaries was taken away. Gurū's contemporary poet Saināpati says:

According to the Will of God  
 The true Gurū ordained the Khālsā;  
 By creating the Khālsā Holy Order  
 He eliminated the Masaṇds.  
 Contemplate the Name of God.  
 Be free from all bondage;  
 Be a Khālsā of the Gurū.  
 And turn your back on masaṇds.<sup>18</sup>

#### ELIMINATION OF ALL POSSIBILITIES OF ANY INDIVIDUAL ASSUMING RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL AUTHORITY OVER THE SIKH COMMUNITY

The main aim of creating the Khālsā was to give democratic ideals as the basis of all further religious and political leadership of the Sikhs. No individual was to ever act as Pope, Dictator or a Monarch, and whenever this sacred principle of Sikh polity has been flouted, the Sikhs have suffered tremendously, and great achievements and victories have been turned to grave disasters.

There are about more than one dozen contemporary and near-contemporary documents, which confirm that just before his death Gurū Gobind Singh had clearly informed the Sikh *Saṅgats* and his followers that:

“These are not the times to bestow power and authority exclusively on One Person, who may become a selfish leader and misuse his authority to put into the bondage of his dictatorship on all the people: *svārāin swārath āpne jahi, babdhan kare lok sabh tāhi*. People have the tendency to adopt those false gurūs and hypocrites as divine teachers, who display wealth and pretend to have some magical powers. They are devoid of peace and enlightenment. They care not for the moral and spiritual values. They only look for material success and prosperity. They are guided by selfish motives. You will see gurūs, emerging everywhere and running to the houses of the people in search of followers. When they quarrel with one gurū, they will go to another. Thus corruption will creep into religious places. People will call themselves saints, but the minds of these saints would be obsessed with greed and lust. So now you shall worship the Holy *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib* as the living Embodiment of My Presence.”

During his lifetime, Gurū Nānak told Bhāi Buḍḍhā, Master of Ceremonies (who anointed the five successors of Gurū Nānak) that “My Light shall continue to manifest in ten Forms. While your descendants shall continue to be the Master of Ceremonies of subsequent Gurūs. After the tenth Gurū there shall be no human successor.”<sup>19</sup> Now that prophecy of Gurū Nānak has come true, the whole Sikh Community is the *Khālsā Saṅgat*. I have placed the *Khālsā* in the arms of the Almighty Wielder of the Supreme Sword (*Srī-Asiketu*), God Almighty. The *Khālsā* should hold in his heart the Word of God as My Living Presence.” Then said, Gurū Gobind Singh to his disciples attending him: “Take me to the Presence of the Primal *Satgurū*, the Holy *Ādi Granth*.” When the Master, Gurū Gobind Singh was in the Presence of the Holy Book, he stood up and took in his hands five paisā and coconut and circumambulated

around the *Ādi Granth* three times; he then placed the five paisā and coconut before the Holy book and prostrated before it and then said with rare glow on his face, "I declare fearlessly and in unambiguous terms that from this day onwards my disciples should know no other Gurū besides the Holy *Ādi Granth*. Whoever wishes to talk to me should study and read the *Ādi Granth*. The *Khālsā* is the real Saṅgat, (Ordained Congregation) and this Saṅgat (Spiritual Assembly) is my visible and human form. Let the *Khālsā* imbibe my teachings in their heart and live sincerely according to the Sikh Code of Conduct. I shall ever be close to such a Sikh in mind and spirit."<sup>20</sup>

Thus Gurū Gobind Singh introduced the New Baptism of the double-edged sword to disqualify all pretender and impostor gurūs and Masaṅds as legitimate teachers of Sikhism, and to prevent any individual among the Sikhs emerging a New *Messiah*, Gurū, or Pope of the Sikhs.

## REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Throughout the Gurū period of Sikh history the Mughal records addressed the Sikh community as *Nānakprast* or *Nānakpañthis*.
2. Then came Gurū Nānak to Kartārpur  
He discarded his garb of mendicants.  
Now wearing ordinary worldly clothes: *Saṃsārik kapre*  
He established his Pontific Throne.

Bhāi Gurdās, *Vār. I, Pauṛī* 38.

3. (i) *Mehmā Parkāsh*.  
(ii) *Purātan Janam Sākhī*.
4. *bāṇī gurū gurū hai bāṇī*  
*vich bāṇī amritū sāre*.  
The Word is the Gurū, and the Gurū is the Word;  
The Divine Word is brimming with the nectar of life.  
If the disciple acts on whatever the Word of Gurū teaches,  
He shall certainly be exalted and liberated.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Rām Dās, *Naṭ Narāṇ*, p. 982.

5. *Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Nānak, *Vār Mājh*, p. 145.
6. It was March 27, during the lifetime of Gurū Amar Dās and it is April 13, now, and it shall be April 14, within few years.
7. Indūbhūshan Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khālsā*, vol. i, pp. 181-82.
- 8.(i) Rattan Singh Bhaṅgū in his *Prāchīn Pañth Parkāsh* gives the day as Wednesday, but the Samvat given by him as 1752 (1695 A.D.) is incorrect (as quoted by Dr Gaṇḍā Singh in his edited version of Kavī Saināpati's *Gur Sobhā Granth*).
- (ii) Pāl Singh Pūrewāl, *Jantrī 500 Years*.  
The calculations by the traditional scholars calculate the date as March 30, 1699 A.D.
9. Duncan Greenlees, *The Gospel of Gurū Granth Sāhib*, p. cvi.
10. (i) Giānī Thākur Singh, *Gurdwāre Darśan*, pp. 532-539.  
(ii) Kāhan Singh, *Mahān Koś*, p. 593.  
(iii) Harbañs Singh (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, vols. 1-3.
11. Sarūp Dās Bhallā, *Mehmā Parkāsh*, Sākhī. 226:3.
12. Innumerable letters of Gurū Gobind Singh are now available in which he has asked the Khālsā Saṅgat of various places to wrest control from the Masañds, but not to be too harsh with them. Those who accepted the Khālsā Holy Order were to be included in the New Holy Order, but they could not continue as missionaries with special delegated authority. That was now with the Khālsā Saṅgat, where the collective majority decision were to prevail.
13. *Dasam Granth*, Gurū Gobind Singh, *Śabad*. 1, p. 716.
14. The lines of the Śabad are:  
*chaṭpaṭāī chit mai jariyo*  
*triṇ jiyon karodhat hoi*  
*Dasam Granth*, Gurū Gobind Singh, *Śabad*. 14, p. 716.
15. Mahātmā Gāndhī, *Young India*, (Essay), 1924.
16. *Maāsir-i-Ālamgiri*, (Bibliotheca Indica), p. 94.
17. *Parchān Sewā Dās*, Invocation.
18. Kavī Saināpati, *Gursobhā Granth*, 5.32-148, 46-162.
19. This prophecy is supported by two documents:
- (i) Bhāi Gurdās is his *Vār*. 1, *Paurī*. 48, says that Sikhs asked Gurū Hargobind, "Master, we see you as the Sixth Form of Gurū Nānak. How many more Gurūs will there be?" The Omniscient Gurū replied, "The Foundation of the Sikh *Pañth* (Church) is Eternal, but there shall be two plus two (four)

Gurūs more.”

The question arises why did Gurū Hargobiṇḍ say two plus two (four) Gurūs? It is because he wanted to indicate that there will be two pairs. The first Father and Son pair was Gurū Hari Rāi and Gurū Hari Krishan (seventh and eighth Gurūs), and the second Father and Son pair was Gurū Tegh Bahadūr and his son Gurū Gobiṇḍ Singh. Thus Gurū Hargobiṇḍ's prophecy that there would be four Gurūs after him was fulfilled, and the Gurūship thereafter was bestowed on the Eternal Word of God, the *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib*.

(ii) Maṅgal Singh, *Jīwan Bābā Buḍḍhā*, p. 3.

20. Koer Singh, *Gurbilās Pāṭshāhī Dasvīn*, Adhāya, 21:85-87, 93, 96-101.



## CHAPTER 8

# SYMBOLISM AND INTERPRETATION OF BAPTISM WITH TWO-EDGED SWORD

*Khālsā mero rūp hai khās.*

*Khālsā mehī haun karau nivās.*

The Khālsā is my exceptional Image

In the Khālsā ever resides my Spirit.

The Khālsā is my Beloved and Venerable Master,

The Khālsā is my divine Protector.

The Khālsā is my Father and Mother,

The Khālsā is my body and soul,

The Khālsā is Embodiment of true and perfect Gurū.

The Khālsā is my Gallant and Knightly friend.

I have stated the truth without an iota of misconstruction.

God and Gurū Nānak are to this my witnesses.

Gurū Gobiṁd Singh, *Sarb Loh Granth*, (MS)<sup>1</sup>, 519-526.

## THE MEANING OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLISM

A symbol is a particular type of sign; a sensible reality that symbolizes which cannot be directly perceived or adequately described by abstract principles. The symbol and its suggestive capacity thus discloses something that men could not otherwise know, at least with the same richness and power. The meaning of a religious symbol is grasped not by discursive reasoning, but by a kind of synthetic insight. Frequently, symbols do not have any determinate meaning, but evoke a gamut of related significance.

Symbolism derives its powers from the fact that it speaks not

only to the reflective intelligence but to the entire human psyche. It arouses deep emotional experiences, raises hidden energies in the soul, gives strength and stability to the personality, establishes strong loyalties and disposes a man for consistent committed action. By reason of these properties symbols are of great importance, not only in religion but also in art, literature and politics. Thus symbols remind the beholder of a particular idea associated with it.

The religious symbol points beyond itself to reality, participates in its power and makes intelligible its meaning. The value of a symbol is its ability to elucidate, to compress into a simple and meaningful whole, to provide a centre for shaping of conduct and belief. Symbols are part of the language of faith, the means by which faith expresses itself when it interprets the holy, the eternal, the beyond, and when it communicates the divine confrontations, claims and demands. Symbolism is thus the vehicle of revelation of the Unknown to the known. Born in encounter, given during inspiration, symbols summarize and interpret the experience. They grow and live with renewed inspiration and changing circumstances. At times they appear out of date, but with the change in historical circumstances and by bringing to light their innate interpretation, their significance emerges with new meaning.

Paul Tillich strongly insists on the difference between the signs and symbols. A sign points to a meaning with which it has no intrinsic connection. It is an agreed conventional way of saying thing. Highway codes are made of signs and not symbols. In *Dynamics of Faith*, Paul Tillich lists four such marks. "First, a symbol participates in that to which it points. Secondly, it opens up levels of reality which otherwise are closed for us. Thirdly, it opens up and unlocks dimensions and elements of our soul, which correspond to the dimensions and elements of reality. Fourthly, symbols cannot be produced intentionally."<sup>2</sup>

The *Cross* of the Christians has become a symbol of crisis to be

faced, burden to be carried, suffering and patience and salvation, and it is impossible to interpret Christ without the Cross. In the same way Gurū Gobind Singh introduced many symbols connected with heroism, victory, annihilation of evil, and omnipotence of Divine Power, such as *Tegh*, *Kharag*, *Asi*, which mean "Sword", which do not merely stand for the weapon in the ordinary sense of the word, but much more than that. For him it is the very image of God and even another Name of God, as it symbolizes Justice and Freedom. This interpretation of Gurū Gobind Singh's Sword is given throughout his writings. But people who have never read the writings of Gurū Gobind Singh with the insight and linguistic equipment it requires, not only misinterpret these powerfully sustaining symbols, but degrade themselves by exposing their own shallow knowledge to ridicule. Before we study the symbolic meaning of many things, introduced by the Gurūs, we must bear in mind that religious symbols function within a living religious texture. They are never related merely to man's rational, economic or social existence but to his total orientation of life. This means that religious symbols cannot be invented or discarded at will.

#### THE FIVE INSTRUMENTS OF THE NEW DISPENSATION AND THE FIVE PRAYERS OF BAPTISM: *AMRIT*

We have seen that when Gurū Gobind Singh introduced the Baptism with the Two-Edged Sword, he used five instruments of baptism, each having a distinct symbolic meaning and mystic purpose, which we will now discuss in detail. He also used five mystical prayers and psalms as spiritual medium of the preparation of baptism. The following are the five instruments or ingredients of Baptism with Two-Edged Sword:

- (i) All-Steel Bowl: *Sarb Loh Bātā*,
- (ii) All-Steel Two-Edged Sword: *Sarb Loh Khaṇḍā*,
- (iii) Water,

- (iv) Sugar-pellets: *Patāshās*,
- (v) Five Prayers from Sacred Scriptures for Amrit Baptism, which are: *Japuṛī*, 40 verses by Gurū Nānak; *Jāpū*, 199 verses by Gurū Gobind Singh; *Sudhā-Sawāīye*, 10 verses by Gurū Gobind Singh; *Kabio bāch-Bentī Chaupaī*, 25 verses by Gurū Gobind Singh; *Anandī*, 40 verses by Gurū Amar Dās.

#### CONCEPT OF THE ALL STEEL: *SARB LOH*

We find that Gurū Gobind Singh insisted on using only All-Steel bowl (*Bāṭā*) and All-Steel Two-Edged Sword (*Khaṇḍā*), and the Sikhs were enjoined to wear an All-Steel Bracelet (*Karā*), All-Steel miniature Sword (*Kīrpān*). This is because the word All-Steel (*Sarb Loh*) has a special significance in Gurū Gobind Singh's writings.

Commenting purely from a westerner's point of view, Edmund Candler says, "When Gurū Gobind Singh inaugurated the sacrament of the steel, he proved himself a wise and far-sighted leader. For, of all the material things which genius has inspired with spiritual significance, steel is the truest and most uncompromising. To the *Khālsā* it gave cause and welded them into a nation, and in the dark days of Muḥammedan rule in the middle of eighteenth century when Sikhs were slain at sight and no quarter was given, it drove them on those gallant crusades in which they rode to Amritsar in the dead of the night, leapt into the sacred tank and out again, and galloped back through the enemies lines purified. Hundreds were slain but not one abjured his faith or perjured his soul to preserve the muddy vesture of clay".<sup>3</sup>

According to Evola in *La Tradizione Eremetica*, "Steel denotes the transcendent toughness of the principle of the all conquering Spirit."<sup>4</sup> The Romans believed that iron, because of its association with Mars, was capable of warding off evil spirits. The Belief still persists in Scotland and India. It is a symbol of mental power, effective in the preservation and defence of human life. Gurū Gobind Singh in his Proem to his famous composition *Akāl Ustāfi*,

out of which Ten *Sawaiyās*, used in baptism, are selected as the third prayer of Amrit Baptism, writes:

*sarb kāl jī dī rachhiā hamnai.*

*sarb loh jī dī sadā rachhiā hamnai.*

I take refuge in the Eternal Being: *Akāl Pūrkh*

I take refuge in Him who is All-Steel: *Sarb Loh*

*Dasam Granth*, Gurū Gobīnd Singh, *Akāl Ustāī*, 1, p.11.

For Gurū Gobīnd Singh All-Steel was the Almighty and Infallible God, the Unconquerable Transcendent Spirit, and Steel for him was a symbol of firmness, iron-will, grit, stoic determination at the mental plane, and it was a symbol of moral fibre, courage, conviction, self-restraint and unflinching faith at the moral and spiritual plane. That is the reason why Steel is the ideal metal for Gurū Gobīnd Singh.

#### THE STEEL BOWL: *SARB LOH BĀTĀ*

The Elixir of Life (Amrit) is the name given to baptismal water after preparation. When we say Amrit, we shall mean fully prepared baptismal water. Gurū Gobīnd Singh felt that only a Steel Bowl could hold this Elixir of Life. No other metal had this humility, simplicity and unshakable strength and power. The ceremony cannot be conducted in a bowl of silver, gold, copper or bronze. It must be All-Steel. "If the iron be blunt and one does not whet the edge, then must he put in more strength; but wisdom is profitable to direct." (Eccles, X. 10)<sup>5</sup> Iron is the energy of the human will, and the strength it needs can be supplied only by Divine Wisdom. Thus steel was chosen by Gurū Gobīnd Singh as the metal of Chalice or the Communion cup of the Water of Immortality: Amrit.

#### SYMBOLISM OF WATER

Into the iron bowl, the five Elect (*Pañj Piārās*) who administer baptism, pour clean and fresh water, which when the ceremony

is complete, becomes the Water of Immortality. In Gurū Nānak's *Japujī*, Vital Breath (*Pavanū*) is the Gurū, the Lord of Life, and Water (*Pāṇī*) is the Father of human existence. Water was therefore to be the medium of the Divine Spirit. Why water?

Water is the source of all life; in water all potentialities are contained and in it all seeds survive. Water of life is the symbol of creation, harbour of all seeds. Water purifies, heals, restores youth and ensures eternal life. Why should not that which produces life from the earth also gives the life of heaven? Therefore all natural water, because of the ancient privilege with which it was honoured from the first, gains the power of sanctifying the sacrament as long as God is invoked to that effect. What cleans the body now cleans the soul. What gave sustenance in time now gives divine power and immortality in eternity. "Water denotes truth, specifically natural truths which are knowledge from the Word."<sup>6</sup>

"Water is thus great symbol of Truth or the eternal Reality and source of all manifestation. Water suggests unity, absence of parts, comprehensiveness, purity, motion; also disappearance in evaporation below, and outpouring from above in rain to fertilize the earth."<sup>7</sup> "In the beginning this world was water. Water produced the True and the True is Brahm."<sup>8</sup> No doubt the Water of life has a spiritual and mystic meaning already among the heathens of the East—Greeks and barbarians alike. And water, with its life-giving and refreshing powers, what better symbol could be found for that which would keep off death."<sup>9</sup>

#### SYMBOLISM OF SUGAR PELLETS: *PATĀSHĀS*

We have already stated the historical fact that when Gurū Gobīnd Singh was about to prepare the Baptismal Water (Amrit), the Holy Mother of the Sikhs considered it her duty to add the woman's share on her behalf in the Baptismal Water. Women had shared everything and were equal in all human and religious aspect. She wanted women to share the responsibilities, which this new baptism was bestowing on them. She wanted the Baptismal Water

also to have an ingredient which could go in history as Holy Mother's offering to it. She also possibly wished one of the K's (*Kakārs*: Religious Symbols) to be a woman's symbol.

The feminine grace, the beauty of a woman's soul, the love of the Mother was to be symbolically poured in the form of sugar, which when mixed with water, would become the Milk of life. While Steel and the Two-Edged Sword were to instil valour, fearlessness and fiery pacifism of an unconquerable Spirit, the sugar was to instil feminine grace, tenderness, sweetness and humane compassion.

#### TWO-EDGED SWORD: *KHAṆḌĀ*

Gurū Gobīnd Singh has given in illuminating and clear interpretation of the Two-Edged Sword: *Khaṇḍā* in the second verse of his famous *Bhagautī-kī-Vār*: The first hymn of this very composition forms the Invocatory Prayer (*Ardāsa*) of the Sikhs, which is now used as Congregational Prayer. In the second hymn of this composition, Gurū Gobīnd Singh interprets the Divine Two-Edged Sword in metaphysical terms:

*khaṇḍā prithmai sājkaī jinī sabh saisārū upāiā.*

*Brahmā Bīsan Maheś Sāji kudratī dā kheliū rachāi baṇāiā.*

God First created the Two-Edged Sword:

Symbolizing the two Attributes as Creator and Destroyer,

And then He manifested the whole phenomenal world;

He created Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva,

As divine instruments of the Existence of the Universe,

And thus God brought into Being

The playful drama of Nature: *Kudrat*.

*Dasam Granth*, Gurū Gobīnd Singh, *Vār Sṛī Bhagautī Jī kī*, 2, p.119.

Thus the Two-Edged Sword is the symbol of the Primal and Sovereign Power of God, which controls the destiny of the whole creation. The Two edges of the Two-Edged Sword symbolize: (i) Creative Power of Life and its sovereign strength, its immortality

that can never be overpowered. (ii) Power of chastisement and justice, which protects truth and all those who believe in God and truth. These two powers of the Two-Edged Sword, that is God, act not only between the birth and death of man, but even beyond death, where martyrs live in glory and victory and the tyrants and the wicked suffer for their deeds.<sup>10</sup> We shall discuss this in greater detail in Chapter 13 of this book.

#### THE FIVE PRAYERS SYMBOLIZING DIVINE POWER AND WISDOM

The most vital of the Amrit Baptism ceremony are the following five prayers which are recited in intoned meditative recitation:

##### *Gurū Nānak's Japuḥ*

It is a composition of 40 verses, out of which two are opening and closing *Slokas*. Its opening Invocation Hymn is known as the *Mūlmantra*: Fundamental Article of Faith, with which the Holy *Ādi Gurū Granth* of the Sikhs and all major sections of the this Holy Book begin. It stresses the Unicity of God, the Eternity of God's Name as Attribute of Truth Everlasting. It also stresses on other fundamental Attributes of God, and He is called Unborn (*Ajūnī*), Fearless (*Nirbhau*), Immortal, Creator, Sovereign and Supreme. But He is attained by the Grace of the perfect Prophet, the True Gurū.

Commenting on the Will of God, the understanding of which is key to higher revelation, the necessity of the Gurū, who illumines the seeker with the Divine Name, which must be contemplated early in the morning, Gurū Nānak traces the mystic path of meditation in three stages: (i) *Sravanām*: *Sunīyai*, inward hearing of the Name while contemplating it. (ii) *Manannān*: (*Manīyai*) inward Communion with the Divine Name and the Named One. (iii) *Nidhiyāsan*: *Pañch Parvān*, the State of Divine Elect, the State of Certainty in illumination and highest Enlightenment.



Thus, reflecting on the splendour and majesty of God in all its wondrous manifestations, Gurū Nānak emphasizes the ethics of burning austerity, discipline, patience, fear of God transformed to love of God. He then traces the five stages of spiritual illumination: *dharam khaṇḍ*: realm of Divine Justice, *giān khaṇḍ*: realm of Illumined Knowledge, *sarm khaṇḍ*: realm of Beauty and Modesty, *karam khaṇḍ*: realm of Grace and *sach khaṇḍ*: realm of Eternal Truth. The actions of those who reach this state are filled with Omnipotent grace and everything they do is filled with the love and power of God. The Plane of Eternal Truth is God's Supreme Abode and Transcendent State, where He alone abides in eternal bliss and all who reach that plane are one with Him.

*Gurū Gobind Singh's Jāpū*

The *Jāpū* is a composition of 199 verses in *Braj Bhāṣā* poetry, with a good many Persian words in it. Like the well-known *Sahasarnāma* of Viṣṇu, it is Prayer of Attributes of God, in which Gurū Gobind Singh unveils the mystery of Divine Presence and vision of God in His Absolute as well as Manifest Forms. The opening verse gives the Essence of the whole composition:

*Chakr chihāṇ ariū baran jāti*

*ariū pātī nahin jīh.*

Marks and signs, caste and class,

Or lineage God has none;

His form and colour, shape and garb,

Cannot be described by anyone.

Unshakable in His eternal Being,

Revealed within the heart and soul,

As light and luminous splendour.

Infinite is said to be His Radiant Power;

God is the Lordly Indra of all Indras,

He is deemed Supreme King of all kings,

And Sovereign of the three worlds;

Heavenly gods, men and demons,

Nay even the grass-blades of the woodland  
Proclaim: He is Infinite, He is Infinite.  
Lord, who can enumerate all your Names?  
Your Attributive Names, I will relate  
Through your gracious illumined wisdom.

*Dasam Granth*, Gurū Gobind Singh, *Jāpū*, 1, p.1.

In the *Jāpū* of Gurū Gobind Singh, God is revealed against the background of Nature as resplendent Light and Power. He is many and yet One. He is Beauty and Truth. He is Chastiser and Merciful. He is Light of all prophets, King of kings and Mother of Universe.

*Ten Sudhā Sawāīye of Gurū Gobind Singh*

The Ten *Sawāīye* recited in the baptism ceremony are from Gurū Gobind Singh's major composition *Akāl Ustati* 30-40. As baptism is called Amrit (Elixir of Life) Ceremony, these *Sawāīyas* are called *Sudhā Sawāīye*. The Word *Sudhā* in Sanskrit means *Amrit* (Nectar). So *Sudhā Sawāīye* means Ambrosial Quatrains.

The theme of these quatrains is that all Paths to God, except that of Love, are futile, and all human achievements of political power and glory are profitless without the love of God. There is a prophetic hope and vision in one of the quatrains, which emphatically states that a day will come when tyrants and despots will either go to the grave, or will have to kneel down before the Power of God and worship Him. The noble and virtuous, the saints and the men of wisdom, shall walk the earth without fear which oppresses everyone throughout the world today:

*dānav dev phaṇid apārā.*

*gaṇḍharb jachh rachai subh chārā.*

Mighty despots and Illumined Saints,

Night walkers and serpent-Kings

Of the past and the present;

Even those that in future be,

Will one and all worship Thee.  
 Creatures on land, earth and sea,  
 Erelong will adore and contemplate Thee.  
 Virtue will walk in resplendent glory.  
 With trumpet sounds of victory.  
 All hordes of the wicked and dissolute  
 Will be crushed and destroyed from the root.  
 The virtuous and the noble shall dwell  
 In freedom and peaceful contentedness.  
 The perverse on seeing the victory of Truth and God  
 Will quail in agony and bewail their lot.

*Dasam Granth, Gurū Gobind Singh, Akāl Ustādī. 7:1, p.11.*

Gurū Gobind Singh was very optimistic about the religious and spiritual future of mankind. He saw a continuing battle between Good and Evil, between Atheists and Men of God, between Dictators and Tyrants, lovers of Freedom and Equality. God is always on the side of Truth, Righteousness and Human Freedoms. So ultimate victory is always of Truth.

*Gurū Gobind Singh's Kabio-bāch Bentī Chaupāi:*

*The Poets Prayer in Quatrains*

This composition of Gurū Gobind Singh consists of 25 quatrains. The *Chaupāi* quatrains differ from *Sawāiye* in number of syllables. Both have four lines. It is a prayer, invoking the aid of God Almighty during external danger and crisis, composed on a hillock on the banks of Satluj, a few miles from Anandpur and now close to the Naṅgal Dam (Bhabaur Sāhib). When Aurangzeb ordered his son Prince Mu'azzam to attack Anandpur with an army of 5 lakhs, only people with strong faith and nerve remained with Gurū Gobind Singh. It is a poem read everyday by Sikhs along with Evening Prayers, invoking grace and protection of God in moments of crisis.

*Gurū Amar Dās' Anandū Sāhib*

This prayer of 40 verses is by Gurū Amar Dās; the third Gurū of

the Sikhs. The theme is inward contemplation, which begins with seeking the peace-shedding Presence of the Gurū and tells us how to attain concentration: *ekāgartā* or *sāchī liv*: true absorption, which takes the sincere contemplative to the highest spiritual illumination, where the Unstruck Music (*Anhad Śabad*) is heard. This state is unveiled in the last verse of *Anandī Sāhib*. Every verse when recited introspectively is addressed to the mind and the self: "Listen my mind," "Hearken my Soul." We give one hymn:

*e netrohū meri ho Harī tum mekī joī dhari*  
*Harī binū avari na dekhohū koi.*  
 O My eyes, God has placed  
 His Light within your depths,  
 See no other besides the true Lord.  
 Besides the True Lord, see no other,  
 By His grace can He be seen.  
 This venomous world you see  
 Is embodiment of the Spirit of God.  
 By His Grace the world is seen  
 As Manifest Spirit of God.  
 By the Grace of the eternal Gurū  
 Consciousness of His All-pervading presence is unveiled.  
 When I look with an illuminated consciousness,  
 I see that there is but One God.  
 There is none other besides the One Lord.  
 Says Nānak: these eyes were blind in ignorance  
 On meeting the true prophet: the *Satgurū*  
 They attained mystical sight of inner vision: *divya-drīṣṭi*

*Anandī Sāhib, Paurī. 36,*

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Amar Dās, p. 922.*

Thus the five instruments of Dispensation and the five prayers blend into the Sikh Baptismal Water, called Amrit: the Elixir of Life or the Water of Immortality. Bhāi Gurdās defines this doctrine of baptismal water : "*pīvohū pāhul khaṇḍedhār hoi janam suhelā* : Accept ye the baptism of double-edged sword, your soul

will be redeemed in joy and peace.<sup>11</sup>

### BHĀI MANĪ SINGH'S INTERPRETATION OF KHĀLSĀ BAPTISM

The great Apostle and martyr Bhāi Manī Singh, who lived with Gurū Gobīnd Singh throughout the Gurū's life and is remembered as the greatest theologian and missionary apostle of his times, has given a novel interpretation of the Baptism of the Two-Edged Sword: *Khaṇḍe dī Pāhul*. He divides the ceremony into three parts, and says that the symbolic interpretation of each part is there in the multifarious writings of Gurū Gobīnd Singh.

*The Five Prayers:* Symbolizes the divine power and grace of God and His Word in the Sacred Scriptures.

*The Two-Edged Sword:* which symbolizes the Heroic Spirit and inspiration (*Vir Rasa*), the Kṣatriyā Spirit of dying for righteousness and freedom.

*Water:* represents Nature or life in Nature (*Samṣāra*). Bhāi Manī Singh adds that corresponding to these three essential elements in human life, which in the life of a Sikh must remain in a balanced form, Gurū Gobīnd Singh wrote three types of literary compositions, each having a distinct purpose. These writings were compiled for the first time by Bhāi Manī Singh and Bābā Binod Singh about two decades after the death of Gurū Gobīnd Singh. This compilation is known as *Dasam Granth*:

(i) *Amrit-māi Bāṇī*: Spiritual and Philosophical Writings of Gurū Gobīnd Singh. These include, *Akāl Ustatī*, *Jāpū*, *Gyān Prabodh*, *Kāl jī Kī Ustat*, *Śabads*.

(ii) *Yudh-māi Bāṇī*: Historical Writings of the heroism and battles of Lord Rāma, Kṛṣṇa and other Classical Heroes; also *Chaṇḍī Charitar* etc. This section includes his own Autobiography and first hand account of his battles fought before 1695 A.D.

(iii) *Sanṣār-māi Bāṇī*: Writings of human nature about society, women and sex psychology of men and women, called in Indian tradition *Upakhyān*.<sup>12</sup> This statement of Bhāi Manī Singh not only

throws light on the symbolism of *Khālsā* baptism, but also confirms the fact that all types of compositions included in the *Dasam Granth* are the writings of Gurū Gobīnd Singh. We should not expect one type to resemble another type. The careless copyists have, no doubt, mutilated many compositions.

## REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. *Sarb Loh Granth* appears to have been compiled long after the compilation of *Dasam Granth*. There are stray verses of Gurū Gobīnd Singh in it. But quite a large part of it is by some poet. This is quite clear from the internal evidence of this work.
2. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, II, p. 42.
3. Edmund Candler, *The Mantle of the East*, pp. 120-21.
4. J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, p. 312.
5. G.A. Gaskell, *Dictionary of All Scriptures and Myths*, p. 400.
6. Swedenborg Apoc Rev: No. 50.
7. G.A. Gaskell, *Dictionary of All Scriptures and Myths*, p. 400.
8. *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, V. 5.1.
9. Charles Kingsley, *The Water of Life*, p. 3.
10. Gurū Gobīnd Singh, *Dasam Granth*, *Vār Srī Bhagautī jī kī*, *Paurī*. 1, p. 119.
11. Bhāī Gurdās II, *Vār*. 41, *Paurī*. 1, Line. 4.
12. Bhāī Manī Singh, *Sikhān dī Bhagatmālā*, *Sākhī* No. 128. .

## CHAPTER 9

# THE CEREMONY OF ADMINISTERING KHĀLSĀ BAPTISM

### Who Is Eligible To Be Baptized

Baptism in Sikhism has never been a ceremony for merely converting people to the New Faith, but it has a positive purpose to bring about a complete change; a new life and a new outlook. It is the inner illumination of the mind and heart. If it does not in any way alter the heart of the recipient, there is then something seriously wrong either with the recipient, or those who have administered baptism to him. If the recipient is a deserving seeker, ready for living according to the vows of a baptized Khālsā (*adhikārī*), and if those who administer baptism are morally and spiritually competent to administer *Amrit* baptism, the novice will certainly experience an inner transformation, a spiritual rebirth. The novice who wishes to enter the Khālsā Holy Order should fulfil the following conditions:

- (i) Any man or woman above the age of sixteen, belonging to any race, nationality, speaking any language is eligible for receiving baptism, but he should be fully conversant with the discipline of the Khālsā Holy Order. He should be physically and mentally prepared for the ordination. Every novice should accept *Amrit* baptism after a preparation of three years.
- (ii) The recipient should be about sixteen years old so that he can read and recite prayers. Those who can do so at a younger age are eligible for taking *Amrit* baptism.
- (iii) Infants or boys and girls less than sixteen years can be

baptized only if their parents and guardians take full responsibility of educating and training them in the Khālsā Code of Conduct and prevent them from committing any acts of apostasy out of ignorance or lack of proper guidance.

(iv) Novices who are either completely ignorant of Sikh traditions or were non-Sikhs before seeking Khālsā baptism, should undergo at least three to five years of training and disciplining before they consider themselves eligible for entering the Khālsā Holy Order. Those who accept baptism without necessary preparations, knowledge and training in daily prayers and contemplation, generally never fully grasp the spirit of Sikhism, and after formal baptism they have the tendency to transgress the moral rules of the Khālsā Holy Order. Many persons who adopt Sikhism under emotional admiration of some qualities of Sikhism, or many novices born in Sikh families who have abandoned themselves to the life of evil habits which are extremely repulsive of Sikhism, make the mistake of hastily taking Amrit baptism and adopt Sikh forms. While they continue orthodox manners of external adoption, they secretly or openly relapse into their old habits of smoking and drinking.

(v) On the day the novice is to be baptized, he should take a bath; wash his body as well as his hair, wear clean and freshly washed clothes and should be externally complete with the five K's: (i) *Keśas*: Uncut hair; (ii) *Kanghā*: Comb; (iii) *Kirpān*: Sword of about 6 or nine inches; (iv) *Karā*: Iron bracelet; (v) *Kachh*: Drawer of a special type and not an ordinary underwear. The hair should be tied in a tress-knot on the head and the turban tied on it gracefully. The novice should be thoroughly disciplined in keeping and maintaining these Five K's. Although they are externals and only the removal of *Keśas* (hair) is an act of apostasy, all other four K's are equally essential. Their significance and symbology is explained in Part IV, Chapters 12-15 of this book.

Before the ceremony starts every recipient has to present himself before the Five Ministers (*Pañj Piārās*) in the presence of



the *Ādi Gurū Granth* and take a vow that he will dedicate his mind, body and soul to the Ten Gurūs and the Sikh *Pañth*. Each one is seriously questioned about his motivation, preparedness and his sincerity about his willingness to take the vows of commitment. If he does not qualify himself for baptism for some reason or the other, he is told about it and is advised to come again when he is fully prepared.

### WHO IS COMPETENT TO ADMINISTER AMRIT BAPTISM

There is no difference between a layman and clergy member of the *Khālsā* Holy Order, who takes up missionary work. Every baptized Sikh who lives strictly according to the Sikh Code of Conduct (*Rehīt*) is competent to administer Amrit Baptism. It matters little whether he is a trained missionary or a person pursuing some secular profession of a physician, lawyer or engineer. When they are put to test, they are judged by their loyalty to the *Khālsā* Code of Conduct and their moral and spiritual life, all aspects of which are thoroughly probed before they are considered competent about their moral and spiritual life. They all have to submit themselves to strict closed door scrutiny in the presence of the *Ādi Gurū Granth*. They have to tell the truth and the whole truth about their inner life. They are forgiven for minor errors or omissions after some punishment or reprimand is given to them. The minimum condition which a Minister in Amrit Baptism requires are five: He must assure on oath other Five, who are participating (Four out of Five *Pañj Piārās*, and *Granthī*, (the Temple Priest) who joins for other rites of the ceremony, that:

- (i) he has not committed any of the four acts of apostasy.
- (ii) he has not taken any wine, spirit, hemp, marijuana or any drug.
- (iii) he has been reciting his prayers regularly.
- (iv) he has not committed any crime like theft, cheating,

exploiting, perjury, gambling etc.

- (v) he is physically complete, mentally balanced. Physically complete means that none of his limbs should be maimed or missing. Even a person whose little finger has been amputated is physically incomplete. He cannot be included among the Pañj Piārās. This doctrine will be better explained in the next chapter.

Before the ceremony begins, all the Five Ministers selected by the congregation are scrutinized. If it is found that any one has transgressed any of the moral principles, he is rejected. Another person has to be selected. Before a person accepts the duty of administering baptism, he must take a bath, wash his hair. All the five then wear traditional robes, mostly white, blue or yellow. Women also can administer baptism. Out of the five some may be men other may be women, but they must all be above 18 years of age. Gurū Amar Dās appointed women missionaries and priests even in remote areas where the Muslim culture and rule dominated. Choice was made on the basis of ability and character and not on the basis of age or sex.

#### PREPARATION OF *AMRIT* BAPTISM

On the altar of the Sikh Shrines one always see *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib*, the Holy Book of the Sikhs. In the sanctum sanctorum of the Holy Book, right in front of it, are placed all the things required for preparing Amrit Baptism: Sugar-pellets, bowl, water, Two-edged Sword, and the sacramental food (*Kaṛāh Praśād*), to be distributed after the ceremony is over.

Around the Steel Bowl stand the Five Ministers, elected for the ceremony, called the Pañj Piārās: the Five Beloved Ones of the Gurū, who represent the Gurū physically. All the novices stand in a semi-circle, with folded hands. Men and women, boys and girls, the rich and poor, all stand in one row. Segregation of women, as the Muslims do in the mosque, is a social sin and intolerable

discrimination.

The Five Minister stand with folded hands and first offer the Invocation Prayer (*Ardāsa*; see Chapter 16) seeking the grace and power, and the blessings and illumination for those who are taking Amrit baptism and for those who are instrumental in giving it. After this prayer, the Granthī or the sixth Master of ceremonies who waves the *Chowrie* over the *Ādi Gurū Granth*, reads the first hymn on the left page of Holy Book, when it is opened fortuitously by the reader of the Holy Book. This hymn is generally called the *Hukam*: the hymn indicating the Divine Will. I have seen Muslims and Christians opening the *Bible* and *Kor'an* and reading it for such direction.

The Five Ministers then start the ceremony with utmost reverence. They pour the water into the bowl, and then they put some sugar-pellets into the water, and while they do so, they recite the Name of God. All the five sit round the bowl in *Vīr-āsana*; sitting in the pose of the classical archers, ready to shoot an arrow. All the Five Ministers place both their hands on the edge of the bowl, clasping it tightly and firmly. From right to left the Five Ministers then recite in deep meditative tone the five prayers one each by turn. They must recite the prayers from memory. They cannot read it from a printed text. Each Minister while reciting the prayer holds the Two-Edged Sword in his right hand, keeps on churning the water while he keeps his left hand on the bowl. After he has completed the prayer, he hands over the Two-Edged Sword to the next Minister. One by one they take up the Two-Edged Sword clockwise and complete them. While the prayer is recited, the Minister's meditative attention should be on the baptismal water. The magnetism of their personality and the transmuting power of the Divine Word passes through their concentration to the baptismal Water, and it is through this divine magnetism that it becomes Amrit (Nectar). The grace and power of the Divine Word actually changes this natural water to the Water of Immortality: Amrit. When all the recitations are over, the five

Ministers stand up, holding the Steel Bowl of baptismal water in their hands and once more they offer the Invocation Prayer: *Ardāsa*. It is a prayer of thanksgiving and seeking the Grace and blessing of God for those who are about to receive the baptism.

### INITIATING THE NOVICES

Each novice then comes forward by turn to accept the baptism. He sits with folded and cupped hands, ready to receive the baptism from the *Pañj Piārās*, because all sacraments should be received with clean hands and utter humility and reverence. The cupped hands in oriental traditions are symbolic of humbly and devoutly seeking grace and Divine Power. The Amrit (Baptismal Water) thus prepared, is then given to novices in four stages through four basically similar rites:

(i) Each of the Five Ministers (*Pañj Piārās*) first pours a little Amrit (baptismal water) in the cupped hands of the novice and asks him to drink it, and after drinking utter each time:

*Vāhi-Gurū jī kā Khālsā,*

*Vāhi-Gurū jī kī Fateh.*

The Khālsā is dedicated to God,

Victory ever is of Almighty God.

This is the Sikh salutation, first introduced by Gurū Gobind Singh, which the Ministers ask the neophyte to utter every time they offer him Amrit (baptismal water). Five times they are offered this Amrit, and five times they repeat after them the vow of self-dedication to God—not to any prophet or apostle, but only to God. The symbolic meaning to this rite is that from that day onward the Sikh neophyte should take nothing that is not sanctified by the Word of God. Whatever food he eats for his physical well-being should always be accompanied by spiritual food of the Word of God. Spiritual food should be considered much more important than any normal food we take. Even while

taking food we should not forget the Giver, we should remember Him with gratitude and humility.

(ii) Then each of the five Ministers sprinkles baptismal water on the eyes of the neophyte, and he again repeats each time *Vāhi-Gurū jī kā Khālsā*, *Vāhi-Gurū jī kī Fateh*. The sprinkling of the Amrit in the eyes of the neophyte once by each of the Pañj Piārās (Ministers) symbolizes that from that day onwards the baptized Sikh shall see no evil, and as the *Anandū Sāhib* of Gurū Amar Dās says, "O mine eyes, in you reside the Light of God." Eyes are sanctified by Amrit, because in them shines the Light of God. He must concentrate on visualizing this Light through the mystical paths of prayers and worship. He must turn his back on moral darkness and walk courageously towards Light and Truth.

(iii) Then each of the Pañj Piārās (Five Ministers) pours the Amrit with his right hand on the uppermost tip of the neophyte head, and he is again asked to repeat five times the divine adoration: *Vāhi-Gurū jī kā Khālsā*, *Vāhi-Gurū jī kī Fateh*. Amrit is poured on the top of the head, because the head is the Seat of Tenth Consciousness: *dasam dūar*. All spiritual illumination takes place in the innermost recesses of the head, called *mastak*.

(iv) Then each of the Pañj Piārās (Ministers) imparts into the ear of the neophyte the Divine Name: *Vāhi-Gurū* which is the Sikh *Gurū-mantra*. In this Gurū-mantra is the spark of Divine revelation of the Infinite, and this very *mantra* was introduced or created by Gurū Nānak. It has ever remained the same. This Word did not exist in Indian tradition in its present form, though in its analytical forms it did exist. God revealed Himself to Gurū Nānak through this Mystic Word. The Gurū-mantra is the Essence of divine knowledge and experience. As an eminent German scholar and monk dedicated to Tibetan studies and practices aptly put it: "A mantra is the truth of Being, beyond right and wrong; it is real Being beyond thinking and reflecting.... It is the direct simultaneous awareness of the knower and the known. The mantra etymologically means "tool for thinking."<sup>1</sup> The Gurū-mantra is

thus a power, a deed, an Experience through a combination of music, wisdom and experience. It is vehicle of revelation and an embodiment of Divine Spirit.

The Pañj Piārās instructs the neophyte in the techniques of contemplating the Gurū-mantra: the Divine Name, (i) Meditation: *Simrin* with the tongue, (ii) *Simrin* with the breath, (iii) *Simrin* in the heart (*hirdai kamal*: lotus of the heart), (iv) *Simrin* in the naval-lotus (*nābhī kamal*), (v) *Ajapā-Jap*: Ceaseless *Simrin* in inner silence and vision. Out of these techniques, instructions are given according to the neophyte's perceptions. The neophytes are told that the techniques of *Simrin* will unveil themselves from within, if they continue contemplation of His Name in the best way they can do. No one leading the life of *Simrin* can jump to the highest stage by artificial imitation of techniques.

Some pretenders to Yoga and other techniques have been putting on sale their own *Tāntric* and other techniques as better than any revealed in the *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib*, notably Yogī Harbhajan Singh of 3HO, who has put on sale both Sikhism and Tantra of his own brand, which does not exist either in theory or practice anywhere in the world. His idle boast that his *Tāntric* techniques of meditation sends a man to the highest heaven in one tenth of the period than taken by techniques given by the Gurūs and *Bhaktās* in *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib*, is the worst charlantanry and the most sacrilegious utterance, I have ever known during my lifetime. It surpasses the hypocritical pretensions of *Nirāṅkāri* Gurbachan Singh or *Rādhāsoāmī* teachers who do not go to this length, and reject *Tāntric* Yoga. Neither the Sikh Scriptures nor Sikh mysticism and theology have anything to do with sex-oriented *Tāntric mantras*, *yantras*, which 3HO Cult are putting on sale in the name of Sikhism and in the garb of Sikhism. There has been worldwide protest against this basically anti-Sikh cult which has been praised, ignored, and even encouraged by petty leaders and half a dozen heavily bribed journalists and scholars. As the seeds of self-destruction are there within the core of the cult, only

those American or Canadian Sikhs who extricate themselves from the inbuilt Tāntric pit of this cult will be able to survive as genuine followers of Gurū Gobind Singh.

(v) The Pañj Piārās (Ministers) then carry the Bowl of Baptismal Water (Amrit) to all the neophytes as they keep standing in a semi-circle. Each neophyte then drinks a little Amrit by turn, first from left to right and then from right to left. It is quite possible that neophytes may be Brāhmins, Parhians, Muslims, Englishmen or Americans, blacks and whites, men and women. From this day onwards they must share their food and learn to eat with one another, irrespective of their caste, position, status, or race. They must now learn to eat from the same kitchen, and if necessary, from the same plate. All the neophytes are told that they have a new spiritual birth, a new spiritual life. A new social consciousness is created in them.<sup>2</sup>

#### MORAL AND SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO THE NEWLY BAPTIZED

The following are the moral and spiritual instructions which form the basic Sikh Code of Conduct called the *Rehit*: Moral Code for the Initiated and Ordained Sikhs. The Šūfis in their Orders call it *Adab-al-Murīdān*. The following are the basic instructions given almost exactly as they are recorded below:

(1) You shall believe only in One God. Besides One God you shall not pay any homage to gods and goddesses of any faith, nor worship any idol or image of any deity. You should not worship tombs or graves of any saint nor any sepulchre, cenotaph. You should not bow before any *Samādhi* of dead saint or holyman.

(2) You shall believe in the Ten Gurūs from Gurū Nānak to Gurū Gobind Singh as the only prophets of Sikh Faith. No other Gurū or Prophet should be acknowledged as their successor. *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib* should be recognized as the Eternally Living Gurū. All hypocritical impostor Gurūs or saints claiming to be as

great as the Ten Gurūs should be rejected and disowned. Such impostor Gurūs or false prophets should be treated as impostors recusants, and recidivists, and their teaching repudiated.

(3) You shall believe in *Sri Gurū Granth Sāhib* as your Holiest Scripture and True Gurū. It should be considered the Embodiment of the Ten Gurūs. The spiritual writings of Gurū Gobīnd Singh, Bhāi Gurdās, Bhāi Nañd Lāl should be treated as canonized Scriptures: *Pramāṇik Bāṇī*.

(4) Your *Mūlmaṇtra*: Fundamental Article of Faith and Worship is:

*ik Omkār, Satī nāmū, kartā purakhū nirbhau,  
nirvairū akāl muraī, ajūnī saibhaṁ Gurprasādi.*

One God pervades all.

Eternal Truth is His Name.

Creator of all things.

Fearing nothing and at enmity with none

Timeless is His own Being.

By the Grace of the Gurū revealed to men.

(5) Your Gurū-maṇtra, the Divine Name which you should contemplate every morning and whenever you get time and solitude is *Vāhi-Gurū*: Wondrous art Thou O Enlightener of Soul.<sup>3</sup> Every morning you should rise up, take your bath and sit in Simrin: Contemplation of Divine Name.

COMMENTS: Simrin, as we have said is exactly the same thing as *Dhikr* (pronounced *Zikr*) in *Ṣūfī* tradition and *Nām-Jap* in *Bhaktī* tradition. As a matter of fact Bhāi Nañd Lāl in his Persian writings uses the word *Yād* (*hard*): Remembering; and *Dhikr* (pronounced *Zikr*) thereby indicated complete identity with the doctrine. Both Simrin and *Dhikr* mean recollection and remembrance. Both Simrin and *Dhikr* are spiritual exercises designed to render God's Presence throughout one's being. There are a number of methods employed, such as rhythmical invocation of God's Names to attain spiritual concentration.



(6) Sit in meditation before dawn and recite the following prayers. Morning Prayers: All the morning prayers used in preparing Amrit baptism are fixed as morning prayers:

- (i) *Japujī* of Gurū Nānak.
- (ii) *Jāpū* of Gurū Gobīnd Singh.
- (iii) *Sudhā Sawāīye* of Gurū Gobīnd Singh.
- (iv) *Kabio-bāch Bentī Chāupaī* of Gurū Gobīnd Singh.

Also read with Evening Prayer: *Rehīrās*.

- (v) *Anandū Sāhib* of Gurū Amar Dās<sup>4</sup>.

Evening Prayers after sunset:

- (vi) *Rehīrās*.
- (vii) *Kīrtan Sohilā*: Bed Time Prayer.

(7) From this day onwards your divine Father is Gurū Gobīnd Singh and your divine Mother is Mātā Sāhib Devī.

(8) You should wear the five emblems of the *Khālsā* Holy Order called *Kakārs* in Puñjabī, because they begin with the letter 'K'. They are now called "K's" in English and *Kaf's* in Persian. The following are the five K's:

- (i) *Keśās*: hair with turban on. It also includes the beard, of men.
- (ii) *Kaṅghā*: comb.
- (iii) *Kīrpān*: Sword 6-9 inches (least miniature length 2-3 inches). It is said when Mahārājā Ranjit Singh opened the cenotaph of Gurū Gobīnd Singh in search of some relics of the last Gurū, he found only a miniature *Kīrpān*, 3 inches in length.

- (iv) *Karā*: iron bracelet.

- (v) *Kachh*: Underwear coming to a little above knees.

- (9)(i) Let not you hands ever indulge in theft, plunder and exploitation of the poor.
- (ii) Let not your ears hear calumny, nor should you ever cause injury to others by spreading falsehood about them.
- (iii) Let not your eyes covet other people's wealth and wives.
- (iv) You shall not indulge in gambling, betting and other

immoral games.

(v) You shall not indulge in cruelty, hatred, greed, falsehood.

(10) You should not take wine or any intoxicant like opium, marijuana (hemp), heroin, hashish, *bhang*, cocain etc. All these intoxicants are strictly prohibited and considered very harmful for religious and spiritual life.

(11) You should not believe or practice any yogic *āsanas* for *siddhīs*, nor should you practice any Tāntric *yañtras*, *mantras*, nor should you believe in any astrological superstitions, omens and auspicious days and moments. Every moment when you can remember God and every place and time when you remember God and offer prayers to Him, is auspicious for doing any work.

(12) You should not in any way accept any teaching of Brāhmins and Brāhmaṇical rites, or of Yogīs and their *āsanas* and *siddhīs*, or of miracle mongering *Pīrs*. You should not believe in fasts or self-mortification in this Path of love and devotion: *Bhakti*.

(13) You should avoid family and cultural relations with the following break-away Outgroups of Sikhism.

(i) *Followers of Miṇās*: Prithī Mal (elder brother of Gurū Arjan) and his successors Meharbān, Harjī, who set up parallel Gurūship and separate *Granth* of their own. They started identifying themselves more with Vaiṣṇavism and Brāhmaṇical Hinduism in the hope of attracting more Hindu disciples and called themselves *Bhaktiās*. The word *Bhaktiās* is used mainly for Vaiṣṇavas of the Rāma and Kṛṣṇa cult in the Sikh Scriptures.

(ii) *Dhīr Mal's followers*: Dhīr Mal was brother of Gurū Hari Rāi (seventh Nānak). He set up his parallel *gaddi* at Kartārpur, but his successors during the time of the *Misals* accepted Khālsā Amrit baptism, and they are now virtually merged in the Khālsā Holy Order.

(iii) *Rām Rāi's Followers*: Rām Rāi set up a parallel Gurūship after the seventh Gurū, but failed to capture the following of the Sikhs. He has some followers now. Rām Rāi was burnt alive by one of his ambitious followers, and his four wives were saved from a

similar fate by Gurū Gobind Singh, who offered one of his disciples to look after the *derā* of Rām Rāi under the supervision of his wife Pañjāb Kaur. Rām Rāi's school of thought deviated into acquiring occult powers. But till recently they were devoted to *Gurbāṇī* of *Ādi Gurū Granth*.

(iv) *The Masaṇds and their Followers*: Some Masaṇds had built their own cults, and for some time became strong rivals of the *Khālsā* Holy Order. Those who repented were made members of the *Khālsā* Holy Order. They have been eliminated and forgotten.

Although most of these discredited cults have either disappeared from the historical scene, or have been absorbed by the *Khālsā* Holy Order, or have become close associates of Sikhism, the new cults that have emerged under various colours and names, like the *Nāmdhārī* movement, which started with the noblest and greatest saint in Sikh history by Bābā Rām Singh, has constructed 11th, 12th 13th Gurūs, which are not accepted by the Sikhs. Bābā Rām Singh insisted on *Amrit Prachār* orthodoxy in *Khālsā* Rehit, based mostly on *Prem Sumārag*, a medieval work, but the new *Nāmdhārī* leaders have drifted away from these basic principles.

The *Rādhāsoāmīs*, *Puñjāb* branches, started using *Ādi Gurū Granth* and *Gurbāṇī* as a source book, but with the *Rādhāsoāmī* teachers as the gurūs. There have been nearly a dozen splits and branches in this movement. The *Niraṅkāri* movement was started as Reform movement by an eminent Saint Bābā Dayāl Jī in the middle of nineteenth century, but Avtār Singh and his son Gurbachan Singh have not only disowned the founders of their own *Niraṅkāri* movement in 1947, but have made it a cult encouraging every immoral and irreligious activity in the name of religion. Upto 1955, they kept on using *Ādi Gurū Granth* to attract Sikh devotees, but as they have been patronized by the anti-Sikh political forces in Delhī to harm Sikhism from within, they have become the worst enemies of the Sikhs like the *Handālīyās*, also known as *Niranjanīs* of the eighteenth century.

After the death of Gurū Gobīnd Singh about ten people set themselves as the spiritual successors of Gurū Gobīnd Singh and spiritual leaders of the Sikhs. But the moral, spiritual and political structure, the high idealism of the Khālsā Holy Order, which the great contemporaries of Gurū Gobīnd Singh, like Bābā Baṇḍā, Bhāi Mani Singh, Bhāi Naṇḍ Lāl, Bābā Dīp Singh had established by their suffering and martyrdom, was powerful enough to sweep away these cults and movements of false prophets. I have no doubt that once again in the next ten years, a storm will rise against the decadent forces, now working in league with these anti-Sikh cults, parading in the name of Gurū Nānak and Sikhism and actually preaching false doctrines of Yoga, Taṇtra and other manifestation of false mysticism under the pious names of *Santmat*, will be swept away. In the next century Truth will prevail. It is the saddest feature of present day Sikh leadership that it takes political shelter under Communist leaders and religious patronage of these cults for their money and votes.

14. *Four Acts of Apostasy*: The following are the four acts of apostasy. Whoever commits even one of these acts of apostasy is considered to be a *patit*: morally fallen from the high ideal. Either he has to present himself before the Pañj Piārās and confess the circumstances under which he committed sin. If he has been forced by some outside power beyond his control, he is forgiven. Sikh prisoners of war and freedom movement fighters were sometimes forced to part with their hair and symbols. They were not considered patits. They were given Amrit baptism again without being given any corrective punishment. But any act of apostasy committed wilfully has been taken seriously, and Amrit-baptism is given to him, if he makes his rededication and commitment convincing.

- (i) *One Who Cuts His Hair Or Even Trims It, Is An Apostate From Sikhism*: Hair is the main Symbol out of the five K's. Without the hair all other K's are useless and meaningless. It is an indispensable part of the complete personality of a Sikh;

complete physically, morally and spiritually. (For Interpretation of this Symbol see Chapter 12).

- (ii) *Adultery Is An Act Of Apostasy*: The neophytes are generally told that you should not associate yourself with other peoples wives, or *muslīs*, *dumānīs*, *turkānīs*. *Muslīs*, *Dumānīs* and *Turkānīs* were popular words for prostitutes or characterless women. There were never any prostitutes amongst the Sikhs. Most of the prostitutes in Puñjāb came from the Muslim community. Adultery includes illegal sex relations with all women and not only Muslim women as some present day scholars try to explain it away. The word *Muslī* or *Turkānī* does not occur in the Sikh Scriptures. The Sikh Scriptures call other women *par trīyā*: women other than legal wife. The *Rehitnāmās* also have this word. It is nowhere indicated that only Muslim women are to be avoided, thereby suggesting that Sikh can have free sex relations with Hindu and Christian women. Adultery covers illegal and immoral relations with all other women. Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh strictly forbade his disciples from doing any harm to the women of the enemy camp, be they Muslim women of the Mughal camp or Hindu women of the Hindu States of Śivālīk with whom the Gurū fought about 15 battles.

Mughals and Afghāns generally molested all captured women, and carried them away as booty to be sold or kept as slaves. Ahmed Shāh Abdālī's poet historian Nūr Muḥammed, who accompanied him in his seventh invasion, describes the character of the Sikhs against whom his Master fought thus: "Truly they are lions in the battle, and at the time of peace they surpass Hātīm (known for his extreme generosity). When they fight with spear, they bring defeat to the army of the enemy. When they hold the spearhead upward, they break to pieces even Caucasus mountain. When they bend a bow, they set to it the foe killing arrow. When they pull it up to the ear, the body of the enemy trembles like a cane. If their hatchet

strikes a coat of mail, then the coat of mail itself on the body of the enemy becomes a shroud. If Brahm Ghor (who fought tigers) came before them, he also would admit their superiority. Besides their fighting, listen to one thing more in which they excel all other warriors. They never kill a coward and do not obstruct one who flees from the field. They do not rob a woman of her gold and ornaments, may she be queen or slave. Adultery also does not exist among them. None of them is a thief. A woman whether young or old is called *burīyā* (mature lady). The Sikhs never resort to stealing and no thief exists among them, and they do not keep company with adulterer and thief.”<sup>5</sup>

Those scholars who still suggest that adultery was prohibited only with Muslim women and was permitted with non-Muslim women, are either ignorant of Sikh history, traditions, scriptures or they wish to introduce new innovations suitable to their own tastes and character.

- (iii) *Smoking, Or Use Of Tobacco In Any Form Is An Act Of Apostasy:* The question arises why of all the intoxicants and drugs which are no doubt prohibited, the use of tobacco and smoking has been made an act of apostasy? It is quite a relevant question. The history of tobacco and smoking indicates the real reason why the use of tobacco and smoking was tabooed to such an extent, that it was made an act of apostasy. A question is often asked as to why smoking is an act of apostasy while drinking wine is comparatively a lesser offence, though a considerable moral offence.<sup>6</sup>

Wine as an intoxicant is in principle prohibited by all major religions though some of the religions use it in some religious ceremonies. No one can drink wine in a mosque, Hindu temple, Buddhist monastery or a Sikh temple.

No one addicted to wine is considered a good or reliable *mān* in Sikh society. Nevertheless, wine, though strictly prohibited along with other drugs and intoxicants, was used as

a medicine for a number of purposes in Indian homes, and had pervaded the Indian society since the age of *R̥g Veda* so much that it was impossible to eradicate it totally from human use. Total prohibition is always much talked about both in Islāmic States and Gāndhian societies, but it is a myth and dream that can be fulfilled only if the manufacture of wine is completely stopped, and that is what no country will ever do.

Tobacco was an evil which had entered India just after the compilation of our Holy *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib*. There are many prohibitory injunctions against wine in the Sikh Scriptures, but we find none against smoking for this very reason. This might have given the impression that smoking was not prohibited by the Sikh Scriptures. But now a days smoking in the west has become even more popular than drinking wine, and the average man finds it difficult to believe that it was unknown three or four hundred years ago.

Tobacco (*Nicotiana tabacum*) received its first name from Tobacco, a province in Yucatan, New Spain; some say, it received the name from the island Tobago, one of the Caribbees, others say from Tabasco in the gulf of Florida. It was first observed at St. Dominga, in Cuba in 1492 and used freely by Spaniards in Yucatan in 1520. It was first brought to England by Sir John Hawkins in 1565. It was manufactured only for export. It was brought to Europe by Francisco Fernandes, a physician of Phillip II of Spain. Ralph Lane, the first governor of Virginia and Sir Francis Drake brought with them in 1586 from the first American possessions of the Crown, the implements and material of tobacco smoking, which they handed over to Sir Walter Raleigh, who became so addicted to smoking that he took a pipe of tobacco even before he went to the scaffold. The Pied Bull Inn at Islington is the first House in England where tobacco was smoked. In 1584 a proclamation was issued against it.

James I in his booklet, *A Counterblast To Tobacco* attacked Sir







composition which originally was the first Rehitnāmā written by Gurū Gobīnd Singh, the Gurū gives the definition of the Khālsā and throws considerable light on the Sikh Code of Conduct. We find very angry comments on the Masānds by Gurū Gobīnd Singh:

*jo karī sev masandan kī kahai*

*ānī prasādi sabai mohi deejai.*

Whoever offers to serve the Masānds

They tell him: Come offer everything

And all your gifts to us

For seeking blessing and favours of God.

Whatever money you have in your house

Bring it immediately and offer it to us.

Day and night concentrate on our holy person.

Even in error do not think of any other,

Except our name and holy presence.

As soon as they are asked to help the poor and needy

They run away from the place shunning charity.

Nothing else pleases these Masānds

Except cheating and looting innocent Sikhs.

In their eyes the Masānds put oil

To make tears roll down their cheeks,

In their hypocritical postures

To weep like unworldly saints for God.

When they see a rich Sikh,

They serve him with delicious food.

But when they see a poor Sikh

They offer him no hospitality.

When a poor Sikh even begs for food,

They spurn him and turn their face away.

These Masānds; these rapacious animals,

Only loot and plunder innocent Sikhs,

They never contemplate and glorify God.

*Dasam Granth*, Gurū Gobīnd Singh, *Tetī Sawāiye*. 29, 30, pp.715-16.

Thus Gurū Gobīnd Singh vividly portrays the character of

being eliminated or absorbed either by Hindu orthodoxy or Mughal and Afghān fanaticism. The battles, these great Saints fought against religious and social corruption and some new ideas of higher mysticism could not be carried on by their successors at any level. Even their works could not be properly preserved, and got mixed up with much that was not written by them. We know of no great disciple of these saints who made a positive effort to carry their message in the form, they wished to give. The Sikh Gurūs were conscious of the fate of these *Bhakti* movements and *Šūfi* movements. So they built a chain of institutions to preserve permanently, what they had built in ten generations. Organization of the *Khālsā* Holy Order was the culminating point and the epitome of these Institutions, which was to be the unshakeable Rock Foundation of the Faith and the Iron Citadel to protect it from all internal and external dangers. It was to be self-sufficient and self-corrective Organization wedded to the Eternal Spirit and Grace of God and the Prophets.

#### TO UPHOLD HUMAN RIGHTS AND FIGHT TYRANTS AND DESPOTS

Gurū Gobind Singh clearly states in his Autobiography *Bachittar Nāṭak* that God sent him to create a *Pañth* (Universal Community), which would uphold continuously in history the highest human and spiritual values and the best traditions of freedom and human dignity. It is for this he sacrificed his father and it is for this he sacrificed his four sons. This interpretation of his mission is further supported by contemporary poets of Gurū Gobind Singh's court like Saināpati and Bhāi Nand Lāl.

#### TO ELIMINATE THE MASAṆD MISSIONARY SYSTEM

We have noticed that the Sikh missionaries known as the Masaṇds had started misusing the authority delegated to them by the Gurūs. They had, by the time of Gurū Gobind Singh, become thoroughly greedy and corrupt and notoriously dangerous for the very existence of Sikhism. In his historically important

You have come, Lord, as a Saviour of the World.  
 You are glorified O Tegh Bahadūr  
 In all the three worlds.  
 You have saved the honour of the destitute,  
 And given protection to  
 The *tilak*, the sacred thread and the temples of Hindus.  
 Mercifully you have immortalized your sacrifice.  
 For *dharma* (righteousness) you went to heaven,  
 Gobiñd Singh became the Gurū thereafter.

Kavī Saināpati, *Gur Sobhā Granth*, 1:12-16

*Parchāñ Sewā Dās*, another contemporary record, also highlights this spiritual and mystical oneness of all the Gurūs.<sup>17</sup>

What then, were the real reasons for Ordaining the *Khālsā*? We find the answer in the writings of Gurū Gobiñd Singh and his contemporary poets. The following were the main reasons which impelled Gurū Gobiñd Singh to ordain the *Khālsā* Holy Order, nine years before his death. Eight or nine years were quite sufficient to discipline the *Khālsā* Holy Order in Code of Conduct and make it self-reliant and self-dependent.

#### DIVINE WILL AND COMMAND OF GOD TO CREATE A COMMUNITY OF RIGHTEOUS MEN

We have already quoted from Gurū Gobiñd Singh's Autobiography, in which he clearly states that God had sent him to continue the mission of Gurū Nānak and take it to the culmination point of creating a *Pañth* (A Nation) of righteous men. God commanded him to create a self-sufficient and autonomous community of righteous men.

#### TO UPHOLD THE RELIGIOUS, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL INTEGRITY OF THE SIKH PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD

The religious movements of Kabīr, Nāmdev and other Saints suffered virtual extinction, because within these movements there was no organizational structure which could defend them from

He who is Nānak is also Aṅgad  
 He is also Amar Dās;  
 Most Excellent in virtues and learning.  
 He is also Rām Dās,  
 He is also Arjan,  
 He is also Hargobiṇd;  
 Merciful, Bountiful, Most Excellent.  
 He is also Hari Rāi;  
 To whom was revealed  
 The exterior and interior of everyone.  
 He is also Hari Krishan,  
 Who is held high in divine dignity.  
 He removed the sorrow  
 Of every afflicted plaintive.  
 He is Gurū Tegh Bahadūr,  
 From whose Light was manifest  
 The divine Gurū Gobiṇd Singh.  
 He is Gurū Gobiṇd Singh,  
 Who verily is Nānak.  
 The Divine Word (*Śabad*) of the Gurūs  
 Are precious jewels and pearls.

Bhāi Naṇd Lāl, *Jot Bigās* (Per), 23-30.

Kavī Saināpati, another court poet of Gurū Gobiṇd Singh  
 writes in *Gur Sobhā Granth* of spiritual and mystical oneness of all  
 the Gurūs.

You are Gurū Nānak, You are Gurū Aṅgad.  
 You are Gurū Amar Dās, You are Gurū Rām Dās.  
 You are Gurū Arjan, You are Gurū Hargobiṇd.  
 You are Gurū Hari Rāi, Hari Krishan also you are.  
 The ninth Gurū in this dark *kālī* age.  
 Controlled His spiritual powers.  
 You are Tegh Bahadūr.  
 Who covered the shame of the country  
 By becoming a protective Sheet (*chāddar*) of all.  
 You are the tenth Master, Gurū Gobiṇd Singh,

Who developed the Master's *Pañth* in abundance.  
 Then Gurū Nānak's apostolic Spirit  
 Came to be known as Amar Dās.  
 It was a unique spiritual transfiguration,  
 One resplendent Lamp lighting another lamp.

Only the enlightened saints  
 Understand this phenomenon,  
 Ignorant fools cannot comprehend it.  
 When the time for prophetic bequest came,  
 The crown of Apostolic sovereignty  
 Was bestowed on Rām Dās of Sodhī family;  
 This distinguished scion of Sodhī family  
 Thus received the Light of Gurū Nānak,  
 As predicted in the ancient prophecy,  
 Amar Dās departed to the heavenly Abode.  
 The Enlightened seers know that  
 Srī Nānak's Spirit was embodied in Aṅgad.  
 The Light of Aṅgad was recognized in Rām Dās.

Foolish and ignorant persons  
 Consider all Sikh Gurūs to be different,  
 From one another in mind and Spirit.  
 Few enlightened saints and seers  
 Know them to be one in inner being and Spirit.  
 Only those who understand this essential Truth  
 Acquire spiritual enlightenment and perfection.  
 Without understanding this phenomena  
 One cannot achieve any perfection on this Path.

*Dasam Granth,*

Gurū Gobind Singh, *Bachitar Nāṭak*, Chapt. 5:7-10, p.54.

Bhāi Naṛid Lāl affirms this oneness of thought and Spirit of all  
 ten Gurūs thus:

*hamū Nānak asto hamū Aṅgad ast*  
*hamū Amardās afzalo amjad ast.*

followers, but were also indulging in a number of corrupt practices.

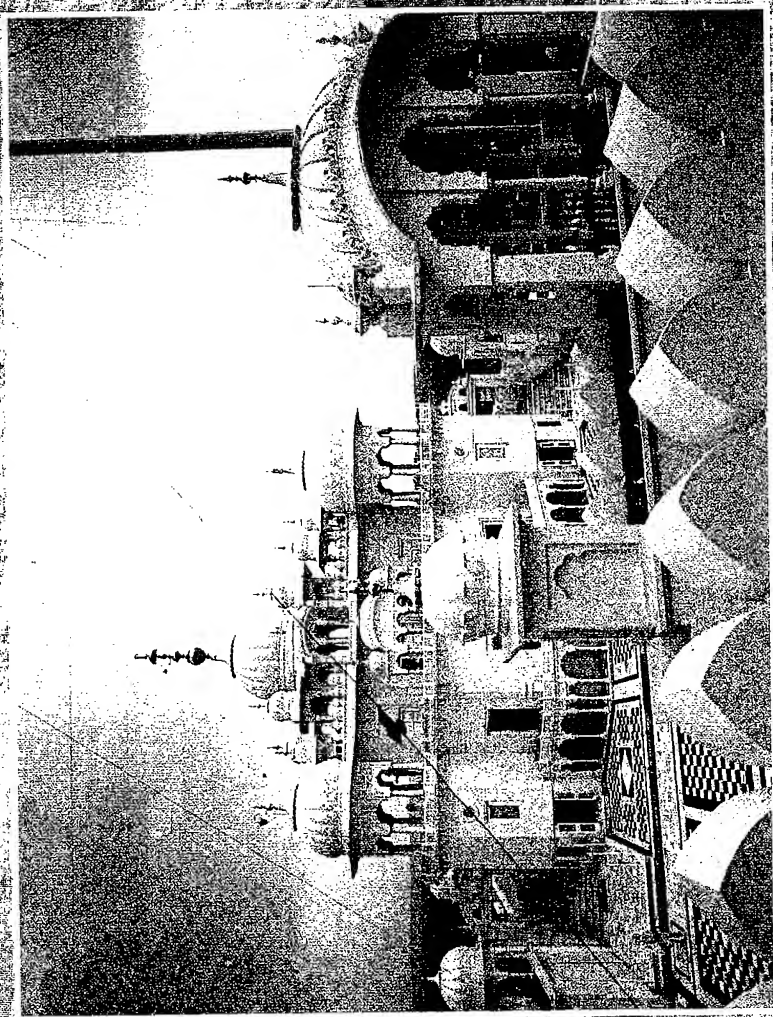
During the Mughal rule all Buddhist and Hindu-Jain faiths of non-violence were mercilessly trampled under foot. All the proverbial heroism of Rājapūts and Marāṭhās as saviour of Hindu religion and culture not only collapsed, but became subservient to Mughal rule and tyranny. Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh and his *Khālsā* alone stood firmly against Aurangzeb's despotism and his policy of eliminating other religious cultures.

Even today during the times of wars with Pakistan and other aggressors, Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh becomes the ideal of the Delhi rulers, more to induce the Sikhs to shed their blood, and is propagated as the greatest prophet from the time of *Rg Veda* to the present day, but as soon as these wars are over, Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh is forgotten, the *Khālsā* becomes suspect. The Sikh Generals are thrown into oblivion and denied legitimate promotions to the highest posts, and the whole Sikh community becomes suspect. The most legitimate demands of the Sikhs are denied. Matters are made worst by a worthless leadership, whose selfishness and flights from responsibility tempts them to surrender to such forces.

The Sikh Community always feels that the Living and Eternal Presence of Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh, their Father and Saviour, is ever with them and through a process of inner germination and regeneration of the Will of the Gurū's grace and spirit, he continuously gives them power, self-confidence and grace of divine protection. They are firmly anchored in their historic destiny, visualized and inspired by Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh, and they know that the sun will never set on them. For us Gurū Nānak was Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh and Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh was Gurū Nānak. Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh himself made this amply clear when he wrote:

*Nānak Aṅgad ko bapū dharā.  
dharam parchūrī ih jag mo karā.*

The Light and Spirit of Gurū Nānak  
Was infused in the body of Gurū Aṅgad,





1. The first part of the document is a list of names and their corresponding addresses. The names are listed in a column on the left, and the addresses are listed in a column on the right. The names are: John Doe, Jane Smith, and Bob Johnson. The addresses are: 123 Main St, 456 Elm St, and 789 Oak St.

and only a thousand yards from the Red Fort and Jāmā Masjid areas; the busiest and most well sensitively guarded areas of Delhī. The Sikhs carried away the body and the head of the martyred Gurū in two separate attempts made within hours of the martyrdom. Not a single Sikh involved in these daring feats could either be arrested or punished in any way. All the three companions of Gurū Tegh Bahādur: Dayāl Dās, Matī Dās and Satī Dās were tortured to death. The Mughal authorities were confounded and terribly shaken by these heroic feats. *Maāsir-i-Ālamgiri*, whose author is called dishonest by Maulānā Azād for not even mentioning the beheading of Šūfi Saint Sarmad and later Gurū Tegh Bahādur, mentions two incidents of disciples of Gurū Tegh Bahādur, who made two daring attempts to assassinate Aurangzeb single-handedly. "While the Emperor was mounting his horse in the square (*chauk*) before the Hall of Audience, a Complainer flung a stick at him. It fell on the other side of His Majesty's umbrella; the man was made over to the *Kotwāl*." "On Friday, October 27, 1676 A.D. while the Emperor was returning from the Jāmā Masjid (Mosque) and had alighted from the boat in order to mount the movable chair (*takhat-i-rawān*), an ill-fated disciple of Gurū Tegh Bahādur threw two bricks, one of which reached the chair. He was seized by the retinue, and ordered to be made over to Kotwāl."<sup>16</sup> So the very historical content of the story is wrong.

Secondly, if Gurū Gobiñd Singh felt in 1675 A.D. that the prime need of the hour was the creation of the *Khālsā* Holy Order, which could be conspicuous in everyway, why did he wait for 24 years to do so? Thirdly, if he did create the *Khālsā* to make it militarily more efficient, why did he do so when he had already fought 15 battles and won nearly all of them? Why was the *Khālsā* created just nine years before he was to leave this world and only five or six years before he left Anandpur for ever? The *Khālsā* had to be created for other reasons, particularly when the *Masānds* not only started concealing their identity as Gurū Gobiñd Singh's

women of all castes, colour, and status. They shall have to get it along with other novices, no matter from which class and caste they come. There would never be discrimination of nationality, caste or colour in baptism."

### REASONS FOR INTRODUCING BAPTISM WITH TWO-EDGED SWORD

Two reasons are generally given for Gurū Gobiṇd Singh's intentions of creating the Khālsā Holy Order. One by some nineteenth century chroniclers and the other by some non-Sikh scholars who just glance at some facts of Sikh history, accept them without checking their authenticity and then write self-styled authoritative books on Sikhism with the idea of misleading the non-Sikhs, who know very little about Sikhism. These ignorant or wilfully prejudiced writers want to present the thesis that Gurū Gobiṇd Singh completely departed from his predecessors, particularly Gurū Nānak. They wish to present the religion of Gurū Gobiṇd Singh as something distinct from the religion of Gurū Nānak, its Founder. Both these theories are based on ignorance of the basic facts of Sikh history, theology and cultural development, and are untenable.

Some nineteenth century historians have given the story that when Gurū Tegh Bahādur was beheaded in Chāṇdnī Chowk by the orders of Aurāṅzeb, no one came to claim the Gurū's body. Every Sikh went into hiding. Gurū Gobiṇd Singh is alleged to have been upset by such a behaviour of the Sikhs. So he decided to create the New Khālsā Holy Order, which could not conceal its conspicuous personality.

The very suggestion that no one came forward to claim the body of Gurū Tegh Bahādur is historically incorrect. The Sikhs performed such a heroic deed that day that there are few parallels in the history of the world. It is the first instance of such a courage, where the body of the great martyr was well-guarded by armed men of the Mughal police force, right in the heart of the Capital

Gurū Gobīnd Singh further writes, "The Brāhmin on hearing this was ablaze with malice and started burning in wrath just as the dry grass burns in fire."<sup>14</sup> And this attitude of malice, and subtle but bitter opposition of all that is most precious to Sikhism, has been persistent among the bigoted Hindus, conscious of their Brāhminical superiority by the divine right of birth throughout centuries.

On the other hand liberal Hindus believing and understanding *Sanātan Dharam* (not Āryā Samājists, who for a century have opposed the Sikhs on all issues just for the sake of running them down) have always taken genuine pride in the service, the Sikhs have rendered to their religion by defending it against oppression and tyranny a number of times in history. Many Hindu families in the Puñjāb permitted one member of their family to become an ordained *Khālsā*. This was encouraged by the eminent Sanātan Dharma leader, Paṇḍit Madan Mohan Mālviyā, but opposed and discouraged by Mahātamā Gāndhī, who even went to the extent of insulting Gurū Gobīnd Singh by calling him "misguided patriot."<sup>15</sup> But the hate campaign which Āryā Samāj papers and organizations carried in their press and on their platforms against Sikhs, Muslims and Christians, changed the atmosphere of amity and understanding to one of bitter communalism. The Akālī reaction to this hate campaign was the Sikh hate campaign against the Hindus of the type, which neither the Sikhs nor Sikhism has tolerated. But in the decadent political atmosphere that has prevailed in the Puñjāb, the Sikhs have not only tolerated, but the process of degeneration has given rise to leadership in Akālī Dāl, which is as materialistic and atheistic in practice as the Communist and as ignorant about the basic values of Sikhism as an opponent of Sikhism.

The Hindu Rājās of Śivālik Hills were also willing to accept the New Baptism of Gurū Gobīnd Singh, provided they were baptized separately and not along with men of low caste. Gurū Gobīnd Singh refused saying, "Baptism was one and it was for men and

*judh jite inhī ke prasāḍī*

*inhī ke prasāḍī su dān kare.*

All the battles I have won against tyranny,  
 I have fought with the devoted backing of these people.  
 Through them only, have I been able to bestow gifts.  
 Through their help, I have escaped harm.  
 The love and generosity of the Sikhs  
 Have enriched my heart and home.  
 Through their grace, I have acquired all learning,  
 Through their help in battles, I have slain the enemies,  
 I was born to serve them; through them, I reached eminence.  
 What would I have been without their kind and ready help?  
 There are millions of insignificant people like me.  
 True service is the service of the people,  
 I am not inclined to serve others of higher castes.  
 Charity will bear fruit in this and the next world.  
 If given to such worthy people as these,  
 All other sacrifices and charity are profitless.  
 From head to foot, whatever I call my own,  
 All I possess or carry, I dedicate to these people."

*Dasam Granth, Gurū Gobind Singh, Śabad. 2,3, p.716.*

Gurū Gobind Singh wrote this unique "Song of the People," glorifying their innate strength and power nearly sixty years before Rousseau wrote his *Social Contract* and about 150 years before Karl Marx formulated his *Manifesto*. It shows his great conviction and faith in the innate strength and democratic Will of the morally awakened masses. From this great ideal of socializing moral, spiritual and cultural power, Sikhism became a great force and cultural power. This Song, and Gurū Gobind Singh's New Social and Religious Order sounded the death knell of Brāhminism, caste prejudices within Sikhism at least. He severed once for all the cultural dominance of one caste and one class, and wherever and whenever Sikhism operates as a living force, it will resist vehemently the caste and class dominance of Brāhmins, Kṣātriyās, Sōdhīs, Bedīs, and now Jāts and other political classes.

authority above his own by bowing before them and asking them to baptize him with the Two-edged Sword exactly as he had baptized them. Taken aback by the Gurū's humility and eagerness to raise the status of the New Dispensation to the highest and the most exalted ceremony, they offered baptism to Gurū Gobīnd Singh. The Word "Singh" was to be the surname of the whole Khālsā Brotherhood, and Gurū Gobīnd Singh changed his own name from Gobīnd Dās to Gobīnd Singh. He was also known earlier as Gobīnd Rāi (King Gobīnd). But the Sikhs call him *Sachā Pātshāh* Gurū Gobīnd Singh. The term *Sachā Pātshāh* (True King) was used for earlier Gurūs also. This Brotherhood was to live as One Universal Community, as One Spiritual Family with God as their only Deity to be worshipped, and Gurū Gobīnd Singh as their Father and Mātā Sāhib Devī as their Mother. All authority of the Masānds was taken away.<sup>12</sup> Five Sikhs, baptized with the Two-Edged Sword, could turn out corrupt Masānds, and with the help of Sikh congregation could take far reaching decisions."

#### BRĀHMINS AND HINDU RĀJAS PROTEST

Shortly after the establishment of the Khālsā Holy Order, a Brāhmin visited Anandpur with many of his followers. He was shocked to find low caste people treated as equals and also taught Sanskrit and other forbidden studies. He felt insulted for being ignored and treated like ordinary visitors and not given privileged treatment. He lodged a strong protest, and in the presence of Gurū Gobīnd Singh cursed and condemned outright what he called the low-caste rabble; the Sikhs, who were treated better than the Brāhmins and Kṣātriyās. Gurū Gobīnd Singh calmly replied, "Do not blame me for ignoring you, for all are equal in my eyes. I will send you the bedding and other things you need, but do not say a word against my Beloved Elect; the Khālsā, my devoted Sikhs."<sup>13</sup> Then glorifying the Sikhs people who were condemned by Kesho Dutt, the Brāhmin, as low caste rabble, he said:

and *Sawaiye* (Ten from *Akāl Ustatī*) and *Kabio-bāch Bentī Chaupai*, all three compositions of Gurū Gobiṇd Singh, and *Anandī Sāhib* by Gurū Amar Dās.

These five compositions now are the five morning prayers of a Sikh. When the baptismal water was ready, he offered it to each of the Five Elect to drink once by turn, signifying that they were brothers in form, mind and spirit. Five times it was sprinkled in the eyes, which lifted their veils of darkness and gave them spiritual perception and insight. Five times it was poured on the crest of the head: the Seat of Tenth Consciousness. This unveiled to them the Transcendent State of the Divine Being in their higher consciousness, known as *Turiyā avasthā*: Fourth State. The baptism for them was a real rebirth into a new consciousness and new spirit.

Then Gurū Gobiṇd Singh imparted the *Gurū-maṅtra*, and thereby gave them His Light and inner illumination. The *Gurū-maṅtra*, also known as the divine Name or *Śabad* of the Gurū was the key to their inner life, the essence of all their contemplations and meditations. Thus Gurū Gobiṇd Singh changed the Five Chosen Ones into a New Embodiment of his own Personality. He called them the *Khālsā*: the Enlightened and the Pure; the Elect of the Gurū; the Living Embodiments of the Apostolic grace and Light of God. He then imparted to them the basic Sikh Code of Conduct, which was to be imparted orally through this mystical ceremony from generation to generation. When some ignorant people started creating misunderstanding about them, then the Gurū's contemporaries recorded some of the Codes of Conduct called the *Rehitnāmās*.

#### THE GURŪ BECAME THE DISCIPLE AND THE DISCIPLE BECAME THE GURŪ

True to the tradition and example set by earlier Gurū's of raising the disciple to the status of Gurūship and himself becoming his disciple, Gurū Gobiṇd Singh not only changed these disciples morally and spiritually, but elevated their spiritual dignity and



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Cardinal Gibbons, during the annual sacramental feast  
celebrated in honor of God - *Amal*

caste (cooks and washermen) from Jagan Nāth Purī in Orissā. The fourth was Mohkam Chañd, son of Tīrath Rām and Mātā Sukhdevī from Dwārkā in Kāthīāwār, who was tailor by profession. The fifth was Sāhib Chañd son of Tulsī Nāī (Chaman Rām) and Bīśandevī from Bidar in central India, who was barber by profession. Thus four of the five who offered their heads came from what were known as low caste people.<sup>10</sup> Everyone was surprised when they were brought out of the enclosure very much alive and dressed like the Master, donning swords and having royal dignity like him. "These are my Five Beloved Elect (*Pañj Piārās*)", he said. They have offered their head to me in body and spirit, and they shall be the embodiments to my body and Spirit, just as Aṅgad was of Gurū Nānak. My Spirit shall ever reside in the *Pañj Piārās*. Whenever there are *Pañj Piārās* (Five Disciplined *Khālsā*) assembled in spiritual communion, there we not only see, we spiritually perceive the Eternal Spirit of Gurū Gobīnd Singh.

#### BAPTISM OF THE TWO-EDGED SWORD:

##### *KHANDE DĪ PĀHUL*

Gurū Gobīnd Singh first took a vessel full of water and performed the Charan Pāhul Ceremony of Sikh baptism in it. He then sealed the vessel and ordered that it should be buried deep on the banks of the Satluj river, indicating that he had performed the ceremony for the last time in it, and he declared that this ceremony should not be performed by anyone again, It ceased to be the baptism ceremony from that day.<sup>11</sup>

Gurū Gobīnd Singh then took an iron bowl made of shining steel and filled it with water. The Holy Mother, Mātā Sāhib Devī poured into it sugar cubes (*patāśās*) at the request of Bābā Gurbakhsh Singh (Rām Koer), a descendent of Bābā Buḍḍhā and the High Priest of the Gurū's Court. Gurū Gobīnd Singh then took a Two-Edged Sword, and concentrating his attention in deep meditation, he stirred the water with the Two-Edged Sword. While doing so he recited five prayers: *Japuḥ* of Gurū Nānak, the *Jāpū*

Was the origin of The *Khālsā*;  
 The Way of the Illuminated Select.  
 Like the Creator who out of five elements  
 Built the world, shining *Khālsā* too  
 Was founded with five warriors.  
 Dharma prospered, tyrant's might trembled.  
 Goddess Freedom smiled.  
*Vikramī*: Seventeen Fifty-six, (1699 A.D.).  
 In the convened assembly sat  
 Gurū Gobind Singh on regal throne,  
 A sight for gods.  
 A new life began for Bhārat.  
 The disciples all took *dikhsā*  
 A sign of consecration.  
 And the Gurū said: "Dear Ones,  
 Nectar is the *dikhsā* you have taken.  
 You are the strong ones with unshorn head."

The pledge of the iron band,  
 The austere undergarment and the sword,  
 No king for you. God is your King.  
 The Rule of Divine Law is the only Law,  
 The wrong doing your enemy.

Gurū Gobind Singh's flag fluttered,  
 High above: the world cheered.  
 The beginning of the end  
 Of Aurangzeb's reign.

Subrāmānium Bhārati

Tr: by Dr Premā Naṇdakumār.

The first of offer his head was Dayā Rām, son of Bhāi Suddhā  
 and Māi Diālī, a Ksātrīyā family from Lāhore. The second who  
 came forward was Dharam Dās, son of Sant Rām and Māi Sābho  
 of Hastināpur (U.P), a Jāt family devoted to the Gurū. The third  
 was Himmat Rāi, son of Joytī Rām and Māi Rāmo, a lowly *dhībar*

to me as a disciple prove it by offering his head. One disciple Dayā Rām, a Kaśatriyā of Lāhore stood up and offered his head. He was taken into a tent, pitched far away, and the Gurū came out with his sword dripping with blood. The eminent Tāmil poet Subrāmānium Bhārati has vividly and realistically portrayed the dramatic happenings of this Baisākhī:

Suddenly on the royal platform  
 Stood a figure, luminous  
 In youth, strength and splendour.  
 His eyes blew divine flame,  
 A halo surrounded his head.  
 In his upraised arm, a sharp sword  
 Belching fire, terrible to behold;  
 Like a horde of lions immobilized  
 Before a magician from above,  
 Seeing him, the numberless men  
 Fell silent, and bowed their head.

Heralded by the flashing sword,  
 The Son of God opened his lips,  
 To unveil his inmost thoughts,  
 And volcanic words erupted:  
 I wish to plunge this sword  
 Into the heart of man;  
*Dharma* thirsts for sacrificial blood.

A hero issued out and said,  
 Gem of Gurūs! I shall die by Sword,  
 To quench dharma's thirst,  
 Thy blessings! Accept my offering!

A Second hero advanced to meet  
 The challenge. Taking him inside  
 The Gurū made the sacrifice.  
 This ordeal by Gurū Gobind Singh

individuality was to be swordlike, and from this day onward Sikhism became a religion with two swords in its hands; the sword of spiritual sovereignty and the sword of political sovereignty, which kept the Sikhs free from fear of political sovereignty under all alien rulers. Gurū Hargobind passed on this sword to all his successors as it had become a part of spiritual Regalia of Gurūship, and Gurū Gobind Singh as we shall see, passed it on to the Khālsā.

The Masānds of the third generation now took advantage of the difficulties, which the Gurū had to encounter because of the political situation. His cousin and some other members of the Gurū's family had set up parallel leadership and gurūship, which ultimately collapsed, and the Masānds either shifted loyalty, or some of them started initiating disciples and keeping the tithes for themselves. At this juncture Gurū Hargobind issued letters to the Sikhs saying that only those taking baptism from the Gurū were genuine Sikhs; those baptized by the Masānds would not be recognized as ordained Sikhs. Those baptized by the Gurū began to be called the Khālsā. The Word Khālsā in Mughal court terminology meant "Land owned by the King." So the Sikhs who were baptized by the Gurū were owned by him, while those baptized by the Masānds were disowned by him. This term was used for all those baptized by the New Ceremony of the Double-Edged Sword, introduced by Gurū Gobind Singh.

#### THE BAISĀKHĪ OF MARCH 1699 A.D.

For the first 24 years of his ministry Gurū Gobind Singh continued to baptize Sikhs according to the *Charan Pāhul* Ceremony, already described. But on the Baisākhī of March 29, 1699 A.D.<sup>8</sup> (Wednesday) when thousands of people had come from far and near and assembled at Anāndpur to be received and blessed by the Gurū, a strange thing happened. Suddenly the Gurū drew his sword, looked very fierce and demanded. "If there is any true Sikh, let him give to his Gurū his head."<sup>9</sup> Let him who is really devoted

not allow any woman to be burnt with her husband. He even encouraged widow marriage and opposed *Purdāh* system. These Missionaries were called *Masañds* or *Masnads*, which in Arabic means, One belonging to the King's Throne, or Envoy of the Gurū. They were given full authority to preach, except initiating disciples. Considerable authority was given to them. But they were not given two powers: (i) they could not use the tithes (offering of the disciples), they had collected without the express permission of the Gurū, (ii) they were supposed to teach and inspire seekers of truth and religious experiences and prepare them as novices for Sikhism, but they were not supposed to initiate or baptize them in any way. They were instructed to lead a simple life and serve people with humility and not exploit their devotion and piety through delegated authority. During the time of Gurū Hargobind corruption crept into this missionary system. The third generation of these Masañds began to take advantage of the political situation in the Puñjāb.

THE SWORD OF *Mīrī*: POLITICAL SOVEREIGNTY AND  
THE SWORD OF *Pīrī*: SPIRITUAL SOVEREIGNTY

Foreseeing the end of Akbar's reign of tolerance and peace, Gurū Arjan trained his son in the use of arms and employed in his *durbar* many seasoned warriors. All Sikhs who were working in the Mughal army were asked to leave the service of the Mughals and join Hargobind in raising the first Sikh army. When Gurū Arjan was tortured to death by Jahāngīr's orders, and the conspiracy of Hindu and Muslim enemies of the Gurū in Mughal court succeeded, Gurū Hargobind on succeeding him donned two swords. He called one, the Sword of *Pīrī*: the Sword of Spiritual Sovereignty and he called the other, the Sword of *Mīrī*: the Sword of Political Sovereignty. This indicates that the sword as a symbol of spiritual sovereignty was already there, and the Gurūs asserted it by their distinct school of thought and refusal to be subservient to any other religious tradition. Its integrity, its path, its dynamic

Dās. He had acquired such an exalted spiritual state and such a high moral status by virtue of his holiness and inner illumination that Gurū Amar Dās addressed him as *Paramhaṇsa*. One day Paramhaṇsa Pāro Julkā suggested that Sikhs from all over the country should come to the Gurū on a particular day, and this auspicious day should be an occasion for national cultural gatherings of the Sikh community. This remarkable suggestion of Pāro Julkā was atonce accepted by Gurū Amar Dās, who fixed *Baisākhī* as the annual cultural gathering day of the Sikh Community, which generally fell in the last week of March in those days.<sup>6</sup>

From that year onwards Baisākhī became significant for the following purposes: First, novices and new devotees were baptized. Secondly, it was an opportunity to meet the Gurū, seek his personal guidance on problems that troubled their minds. Thirdly, the mingling of the people from different States, different races, castes, creeds and colour, and speaking different languages in one all-embracing spiritual brotherhood was a unique cultural phenomenon, which shocked both orthodox Hindus and Muslims, when they saw bitterly antagonistic cultures blending into one worship and spiritual humanism.

Gurū Amar Dās organized missionary work on a sound footing. In 22 dioceses (*Mañjūs*) corresponding to the 22 states of the Mughal Emperor, he appointed 146 well-trained Missionaries, out of which 94 were men, while 52 were women. Never in the history of India had women been given such august position and power. The whole of Kashmīr and Kābul were under Women Provincial Heads. Gurū Amar Dās introduced such radical social reforms "that he struck at the very roots of the influence of the Hindu priestly class, and though in such a matter, where long standing customs of cherished practices were concerned, success must necessarily have been slow, the ball had been set rolling, and Sikhism put on the way of gradual disassociation from Hinduism."<sup>7</sup>

Gurū Amar Dās fought against the cruel custom of *Sati* and did

Sikh: *Nitnem*; (iv) By giving to his disciples new Code of Conduct, new rites and ceremonies, thus establishing a complete break with Vedic and Brāhmanical ceremonies.

Differing on many points from other faiths, Gurū Nānak avoided sectarian confrontation, but he not only welcomed theological discussions in a polite and courteous manner, but provoked a dialogue which gave him opportunity to clearly enunciate his own system of philosophy in the terminology of prevailing religious and philosophical systems. Gurū Nānak's compositions like *Siddha Gostī*, *Om̐kār*, *Ārtī*, *Āsā dī Vār*, are clear examples of his exposition of Sikh doctrines and its distinctive features. He also outlines the areas of common mystical experiences at the highest stage of union with God. He severely criticises the *Tāntric* cults as *Sākta Mat*, and considers them most dangerous for genuine moral and spiritual life. The Gurū emphasized on the centrality of man; social, political and cultural freedoms, of which he is deprived by society and ambitious rulers. In his writings we find a severe criticism of the cruelty and terror perpetuated by the Afghāns and the Mughals. He was of the firm opinion that no religious man should ever submit to oppression and exploitation of any kind.

Kabīr, Nāmdev and other medieval saints suffered a great deal at the hands of tyrannical rulers, but we do not find a single word of protest in their writings against cruelty, which they and the masses suffered during their times. Gurū Nānak did not ignore the suffering of the people. He vigorously condemned the invasion of Bābur and the terror, the Mughals tried to strike in Emnābād and Lāhore. He also condemned the Afghān rulers saying, "The age is like a drawn sword, the kings are butchers, decency and virtues have taken wings."<sup>5</sup>

#### ANNUAL GATHERING OF BAISĀKHĪ: NEW YEAR DAY AND THE MISSIONARY ORDER OF THE MASĀNDS

Pāro Julkā was one of the prominent missionaries of Gurū Amar



Sikhs in the *Janam Sākhīs*, but after the creation of the Khālsā Holy Order they came to be known as *Sahajdhārī* Sikhs. Most of the Sindhīs who perform some Hindu rites and are devoted to some Śūfī saints also are generally Sahajdhārī Sikhs. Majority of the Sindhī Sahajdhārī Sikhs perform all their ceremonies according to Sikh rites and conduct all their services in Gurdwārās with exemplary devotion. To the general masses of other faiths Gurū Nānak said, "Be such a Hindu, be such a Muslim, Be such a Vaiṣṇava." He redefined these terms in the light of his own doctrines. When he settled down at Kartārpur to institutionalize his faith, he gave up his practice of wearing garb of holiness, without which he could not enter places of pilgrimages.<sup>2</sup> By wearing the common dress of a Puñjābī he tried to prove that any dress which is simple, clean and austere is good enough for a Saint, and Saintlike saintliness should be revealed through man's personality and actions.

Many non-Sikh scholars imagine that Gurū Nānak travelled all over the world unmindful of establishing any well outlined Faith. They think he was preaching an undefined religion of love: *Bhakti*. These scholars conveniently ignore the fact that Gurū Nānak spent the last twenty years of his life to institutionalize his Faith and Doctrines. During this period he gave them Book of Hymns: *Pothī*,<sup>3</sup> three daily prayers; *Japujī*, *Rehirās* and *Kīrtan Sohilā*, and the initiation ceremony.

The Word of God became the spiritual personality of the Gurū, which transcended his physical and historical person even during his lifetime.<sup>4</sup> Gurū Nānak, thus, laid the foundation of New Faith: (i) By channelizing his spiritual experiences and imparting them to initiate through the *Charan-pāhul Amrit*: Baptism of the Gurū's Lotus Feet; (ii) By imparting a new *Guru-mantra*: Mystic Word to his disciples at the time of initiation; (iii) By giving to his followers new prayers, such as *Japujī* (Morning Prayer), *Rehirās* (Evening Prayer), and *Sohilā Ārtī* (Bed-time Prayer). These three prayers still form the three of the seven basic daily prayers of a

established his own centres in far flung places like Dāccā, Rāmeshwram, Ceylon and Baghdād, some of which were never visited by his successors. In his missionary journeys he wore Šūfi garb of *dervishes*, and when he visited the Himālayān regions and Tībet, he put on Tībetān robes. But after he settled at Kartārpur to institutionalize the Sikh Church, on which his successors built an autonomously working edifice, Gurū Nānak was determined to translate his new experiences and mystic illumination into far-reaching thoughts and actions. He was now ready to give the world, a new conception of synthetic and universal faith, based on realistically conceived social foundations and political consciousness.

The New Dispensation was then known as *Bābā Nānak dī Sikhī* or *Gurū Nānak kī Mārag*: the Path of Gurū Nānak. The Sikh Community was known as *Nānakpanthis* or *Nānakprast*: Followers of Gurū Nānak's Path and Doctrines.<sup>1</sup> Gurū Nānak positively expressed in his sermons and writings that he was neither a Hindu nor a Muslim, neither a Yogī nor a Šūfi. Thus he left no room for being dubbed a Hindu or a Muslim Reformer. He did not permit even his disciples to accept any of the basic legal and institutional rites and laws of these two great religions, though he shared many of their universal ideas and experiences of higher realization. If a Brāhmin accepted Sikhism not as a lay follower but as an initiated disciple, he had to give up his sacred thread and everything associated with Brāhmaṇical rites and status, particularly the performance of *Vedic* rites and mode of worship. There were lay Muslim followers, but the initiated Muslim followers had to give up their formal commitments to *Šariat* (*Shari'a*). The lay followers from other faiths, both Hindu, Muslims and Buddhists, who were not initiated into the mystical and institutional life of Sikhism, were permitted to follow their traditional path and accept only the moral and spiritual benefits, which a lay follower was entitled to, through the blessings and compassion of disciplined apostles and saints of the Sikh faith. These lay followers are called *Nāmdharik*

## CHAPTER 7

### GURŪ GOBĪND SĪNGH'S BAPTISM OF THE TWO-EDGED SWORD *KHAṆDE DĪ PĀHUL*

*main apnā sut tohī niwājā.*

*Pānthū parchur karbe kahū sājā.*

God sent me to this world giving this mandate:

"I have cherished and blessed You as My Son;

To create and organize a Universal Order of Faith,

I am sending you to the human world.

Go there, and establish Righteousness: *dharma*,

And turn people away from the path of evil,"

I stood before His Majestic Presence,

And bowing my head in humble submission said:

"The Community of Righteous Faith can be established,

If You, O Lord, graciously help."

For this mission and task, I have come to the world:

To establish the Path of Righteousness,

The Almighty God has sent me to the human world.

He has commanded me to uphold freedom and justice everywhere;

To chastise tyrants and despots,

And annihilate their terror and tyranny.

Gurū Gobind Singh, *Bachitar Nāṭak*, Chapt. 6:29,42, p.57.

We have seen in the last chapter that after receiving the *Call*, Gurū Nānak had become supernally exalted with incomparable and perfect enlightenment, and he was determined to translate his new religious experience and mystic illumination into far-reaching thoughts and actions. During his travels he had

Lāl in the month of *Maghar* (November-December) in the year  
*Vikramī Samvat* 1752 (1695 A.D.):

Recite O Disciple 'Vāhigurū'  
Contemplate deeply 'Vāhigurū'  
Enshrine the Word in your heart,  
You shall attain spiritual liberation. (37-40).<sup>14</sup>

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Duncan Greenlees, *The Gospel of Gurū Granth Sāhib*, p. xxi.
2. *Ādi Gurū Granth, Rāga Āsā*, p. 448.
3. *Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Rām Dās, Rāga Sūhī*, p.757.
4. *Ādi Gurū Granth, Vār Bihāgrā*. 1: 16, p. 554.
5. Bhāi Gurdās, *Kabitt Sawāīye*, 470 - 490 are on this theme.
6. *Ibid.*, Vār. 39, *Paurī*. 1.
7. *Ibid.*, Vār. 11, *Paurī*. 3, Vār. 13, *Paurī*. 2.
8. *Ibid.*, Vār. 40, *Paurī*. 11.
9. *Ibid.*, Vār. 6, *Paurī*. 3.
10. *Ibid.*, Vār. 40, *Paurī*. 11.
11. *Ibid.*, Vār. 1, *Paurī*. 45, Vār. 18, *Paurī*. 14.
12. *Ibid.*, Vār. 12, *Paurī*. 3.
13. *Japujī* (40 verses) is the composition of Gurū Nānak. *Jāpū* of 199 verses is the composition of Gurū Gobind Singh.
14. This translation is based on the text, I found in Bhāi Kāhan Singh's library at Nābhā, which his son Bhāi Bhagwant Singh Harijī was kind enough to place at my disposal for study. There are other manuscripts available in some more libraries. All have the same date.

night. A Sikh should have intense love for the Sacred Writings of the Gurū (Gurbānī) and should know the Word to be the Eternal Gurū. He should enjoy the divine Presence of the Gurū in this form of Eternal Word. (21-22)

“A Sikh should acquire the knowledge of the divine Word. He should listen to and recite the scriptures and hymns to others. He should recite the *Japujī* and *Jāpū* with utmost concentration and devotion. He should regularly visit the temple of the Gurū (Gurdwārā). A Sikh should not have any illegitimate relation with other person's wife. He should humbly serve true and devoted Sikhs of the Gurū, and remove all feelings of mine and thine from his mind. He who distinguishes himself by these acts of religious discipline, is an enlightened Sikh. Know him to be my own image and an embodiment of my true Spirit. (23-26)

“He who wishes to serve me with body, mind and soul, let him devotedly serve such a Sikh. The service and devotion to such a Sikh reaches me. Listen dear Nañd Lāl, he who imbibes these virtues is liberated and attains the spiritual state.”

Nañd Lāl again asked, “Master, your Attributeless Form cannot be seen by everyone. A Sikh would be tempted to see you and seek you only in manifest physical form. How can we, Master, see your Attributeless Form within this world of attributes and material qualities. Your Formless Form is infinite. O World-Teacher, Lord of divine Wisdom, whose Light shines in every heart, reveals to us the secret of knowing thy Infinite Form.”

Spake Gurū Gobind Singh: “Listen Bhāi Nañd Lāl to my words. First, a Sikh should contemplate the living embodiment of the Gurū and then concentrate and meditate on the Word; the Name of God. To such a one shall be revealed, the mystery of the Eternal Spirit of the Gurū. He realizes the Infinite through inner communion with the Word, the Light of the Sikh blends with the Light of the Gurū's Eternal Personality.” (27-36)

On the banks of the Satluj river (at Anandpur), Gurū Gobind Singh delivered this sermon on the Sikh Code of Conduct to Nañd

in His Name and the Sacred Scriptures, the *Ādi Gurū Granth*. (6-8)

"My Primal Personality, the Nirguṇa Svarūp (Attributeless Form), is beyond all earthly and human attributes and beyond the grasp of human reason, and therefore it is described as Unfathomable and "Not this, not this." Just as the sun reflects equally in all the vessels of water, so also the divine Light of the Gurū pervades all hearts. It is there as the indwelling spirit of enlightened souls, who have been illumined by the grace of the Gurū. This is my Sarguṇ Svarūp. In every pore of his body divine Light pervades. This is the reality of human existence. I am stating the truth.

"Let him who wishes to hear my voice, listen to the Holy Scripture. The knowledge revealed in the Gurū's Word is the Wisdom of the Gurū. Let him who wishes to talk to me read the Holy Book: *Ādi Gurū Granth*. The Holy Book: *Ādi Gurū Granth*, is my image, my embodiment and my living Presence. Doubt it not in the least. Let him who seeks the grace and blessings of my Presence, get up early in the morning and take bath, and then go to the temple. There he should circumambulate thrice round the altar seat of the Holy Book and bow before it and sit in the divine Presence with utmost reverence and with folded hands: *hāth jor kar adab sion*. He should then attentively listen to the Word of the Scriptures. (9-16)

"A Sikh should listen to the Word of the Scriptures with utmost devotion. The Word is the Gurū; the source of divine knowledge and experience, which we should learn and teach. He who wishes to talk to me, let him study the *Ādi Gurū Granth* and learn and teach it. He who is eager to listen to my sermon, let him listen to the recitation of the scriptures, the *Holy Granth*. Know the *Ādi Granth* to be the spiritual embodiment. Doubt not this truth. (17-20)

"My third Personality is my true disciple (Gursikh), who is devoted to *Gurbāṇī*, (the Sacred Writings of the Gurūs) day and

## BHĀI NAṆD LĀL'S REHITNĀMĀ

SIKH CODE OF CONDUCT: 1695 A.D.

Bhāi Naṇḍ Lāl wrote two Rehitnāmās, both published in the complete works of Bhāi Naṇḍ Lāl, preserved in Bhāi Kāhan Singh's library, entitled *Bhāi Naṇḍ Lāl Granthāvalī*. The first was written in 1695 A.D. as the colophon indicates. It starts with the line: "*Gursikh Rehit suno mere mīt*: Listen my friend to the Rehit of a *Gursikh*." It is Gurū Gobīnd Singh addressing Bhāi Naṇḍ Lāl and answering some questions about Rehit. The dialogue is between *Srī Gurdev Vāch* and *Naṇḍ Lāl Vāch*: the utterance of the Gurū and Naṇḍ Lāl.

Spake Gurū Gobīnd Singh: "Listen my friend, Naṇḍ Lāl, to my instructions on the Sikh Code of Conduct: *Gursikh Rehit*. A Sikh of the Gurū should rise up at dawn and take his bath and sit in contemplation of the Divine Name. He should then recite the morning prayer *Japuḥ* and *Jāpū*.<sup>13</sup> After morning prayer, he should seek the companionship of my Presence: *darśan*. He should come with the utmost reverence and sit in divine Presence of the Gurū. In the day-time he should listen to religious discourses. At sunset he should recite or listen to *Rehīrās*: Evening Prayer. He should also listen to the discourses and *Kīrtan* in the evening. Such a Sikh is liberated and reaches the state of immortality." (1-6)

Bhāi Naṇḍ Lāl asked Gurū Gobīnd Singh: "*Gurūdeva*, you say every Sikh far and near must seek your divine Presence. Will you, Master, graciously describe your inscrutable Presence and Personality?" Spake Gurū Gobīnd Singh in reply: "Listen attentively dear Naṇḍ Lāl, I have three Personalities and three different manifestations of my divine Presence:

- (i) *Nirguṇa Svarūp*: the Attributeless Form, when the Essence of Gurū's Personality is one with the Transcendent Being.
- (ii) *Sarguṇ Svarūp*: when my divine Personality reflects in the illumined souls of illumined disciples and the congregation of the seekers of Truth: *Sādh Saṅgat*.
- (iii) *Gurū Śabad*: Form Manifest as the Word of God and revealed

recite *Rehirās* and at night, before going to bed, they recite *Kīrtan Sohilā* (Bedtime Prayer)."<sup>9</sup>

"After saying his morning prayer a Sikh goes to the Presence of the Gurū in the congregation and listens to the recitation and singing of the hymns of the Sikh Scriptures. Leaving all scruples and social prejudices, he serves the devotees of God. He earns his living by righteous means and shares the fruits of his labours with others. He first serves his guests with food and then eats contentedly what is left."<sup>10</sup> "All the four castes, all the creeds and all the sects of *Yogīs* and *Sannyāsīs*, when entering the fold of Sikhism, merge and blend into One Brotherhood; the *Nirmal Pañth* or *Gurmukh Pañth*: The Community of the Pure, or the Brotherhood of the Enlightened."<sup>11</sup>

"A Sikh of the Gurū is meek and humble when he has power: "*hondai tār so hoe nitāṇā*: he is humble in honour and glory;" "*hondai mān jo rahai nīmāṇā*: he endures and tolerates what is difficult to endure: *ahar jarnā*;" he is sweet of speech, humble in manners, chivalrous and charitable towards the destitute and the needy."<sup>12</sup>

#### TESTIMONY OF BHĀI NAṆD LĀL

Bhāi Naṇd Lāl was the poet Laureate and the most dearly loved disciple of Gurū Gobīnd Singh. He wrote two *Rehitnāmās*: one before the *Khālsā* Holy Order was ordained and the other after 1699, when the *Khālsā* was created. The exact date of his birth and death is not known. He was brought up in *Ghaznī* and moved to *Multān*, where he was a high official of the *Mughal* Court and later *Mīr Munśī* of Prince Mu'azzam, *Auraṅzeb*'s eldest son. When Prince Mu'azzam was arrested, Bhāi Naṇd Lāl came to *Anandpur* and became one of the most devoted disciples of Gurū Gobīnd Singh. He was instrumental in cementing excellent relations between *Bahādūr Shāh* and Gurū Gobīnd Singh. He is the author of nine books on Sikh mysticism, written in the Persian mystical tradition of *Rūmī* and *Hāfiz*.



and even the sense of what is his and what is not his? Such a man, who abandoning himself to drinking wine, forgets God, is punished in the Lord's Court and is severely chastised. O Man, as far as it is within your control shun this wine. Drink only the Wine of Love of God, drinking which you are intoxicated by the divine knowledge of His Presence and blessedness of His Grace."<sup>4</sup>

### TESTIMONY OF BHĀI GURDĀS

Bhāi Gurdās was nephew of the third Gurū, Amar Dās and the co-compiler of *Ādi Gurū Granth*. His works, the *Vārs* on Sikh Philosophy and the *Kabitt Sawāīye* on Sikh Mysticism, were blessed as "Key to the *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib*" by Gurū Arjan. He was the first to give an analytical exposition of all Sikh doctrines. Some of his *Vārs* and *Kabitts* are devoted exclusively to the Sikh Code of Conduct, as it was practiced during his lifetime, from Gurū Amar Dās to Gurū Hargobīnd.

Bhāi Gurdās says, "A Sikh of the Gurū worships only One God and looks on no gods and goddesses for inspiration and support. For him to turn to gods and goddesses for inspiration and support for material blessings was like a housewife becoming a whore, chasing many men for depraved satisfaction."<sup>5</sup> The Essence of God's vision as revealed to Gurū Nānak, is given in the *Mūlmantra* (Fundamental Article of Faith) of the Sikhs. "God is One. He pervades all. Eternal Truth is His Name; Creator of all things, fearing nothing, and at enmity with none. Timeless is His image. Not begotten; Being of His own Being; By the Grace of the Gurū, He is revealed to Man."<sup>6</sup> The divine Word (*Gurū-mantra*) given to the world by Gurū Nānak is "*Vāhi Gurū: Wonder of Wonder art Thou O Revealer of Light.*"<sup>7</sup>

"The Sikhs of the Gurū rise early in the morning and take their bath."<sup>8</sup> "In the ambrosial hours of the morning they sit in contemplation of the Unfathomable Lord and meditate with inward attention and concentration on the Name of God. At daybreak they recite the morning prayer *Japuḥ*. At sunset they

(i) A Sikh who sleeps at normal hours of the night, must rise early in the morning about two hours before dawn.

(ii) He should perform two-fold ablution. He should bathe his body in clean water, and if while bathing he recites the hymns of the Gurū or utters the Name of God in deep remembrance, he shall be performing the second ablution of bathing his mind in the nectar tank of the divine Word. Such should be his two-fold morning ablution.

(iii) Upto sunrise, he should, with deep concentration and attention, inwardly contemplate the Name of God. Such a contemplation in the early hours of morning or when complete solitude is available, will erase from the seekers heart all propensities and sins.

(iv) Immediately after sunrise he should say his prayers: *Japujī, Anandī* etc.

(v) Even in the day-time, while he is performing his mundane duties, he should remember God every moment by repeating it silently in tune with every breath. This state of contemplation is achieved by him, who lives according to the Sikh Code of Conduct.

(vi) Blessed is such a Sikh who remembers God himself and inspires others to remember Him.

It is important to mention here that in many other hymns of the Gurū there are strict injunctions against drinking wine, adultery, hypocrisy or mere pretensions to religion, dishonesty, disloyalty, ungratefulness, treachery or earning one's living through evil or sinful means. Even charity given out of stolen property, or out of money earned by exploiting the poor is sin, and will be punished in the Lord's court by His ultimate justice. Gurū Rām Dās in one of his hymns says, "A man comes with a bowl full of wine; another man fills a cup of it and drinks lustily out of it. Drinking wine cup after cup, he loses his sense of discrimination and his balance of mind. Perversity takes the better of him and he talks senselessly. He loses all sense of right or wrong, good or bad,

flavour of the Nectar in the Divine Word as the bee sucks honey from the flowers.”<sup>1</sup>

He laid strong emphasis on strictly and regularly following the rules of prayer and worship, and made ceaseless efforts to reach God through love and discipline: “My eyes are wet with the Lord’s nectar, my soul is drenched in His love. He tested my heart with His touchstone. He found it pure.”<sup>2</sup> “Be there gale and storm and torrential rain; even then I would set forth to meet my Beloved. Be there vast seas separating the disciples from the Gurū, even then a Sikh would cross turbulent oceans to meet the Beloved.”<sup>3</sup> Gurū Rām Dās gives the Sikh Code of Conduct thus:

*Gur Satigur kā jo Sikhū akhāe*

*Su bhalke uṭhī harī nāmū dhiāvai.*

He who calls himself a Sikh of the true Gurū,

Let him on the morrow rise betimes,

And contemplate on the Name of God.

Let him with disciplined effort

Rise in the dark hours of the morn,

Take his bath and clean his soul in the tank of Nectar.

As he meditates on His Name, imparted by the Gurū,

All his sins and evils will be washed away.

When the dawn breaks at sunrise,

Let him recite his prayers and sing his hymns.

Throughout the day while he moves about,

Let him enshrine in his heart the Name of God.

He should repeat the Lord’s Name with every breath.

Such a Sikh is indeed very dear to the Gurū.

A Sikh who receives the mercy and grace of the Lord,

Receives the blessed sermon of illumination from the Gurū.

Nānak seeks the dust of the feet of such a Sikh,

Who utters the Name and inspires others to utter.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Rām Dās, Vār Gaurī, pp. 305-6.*

Gurū Rām Dās highlights in this hymn the following essential features of the Sikh Code of Conduct (Rehit):

But their practice was most disappointing.  
 Discarding the Name of God,  
 They indulged in worldly ways,  
 O what need I say of them?  
 By the Grace of God  
 I have found Gurū Amar Dās  
 By thy Will, I shall ever abide, O Gurū.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Bhaṭṭ Bhikhā,  
*Sawāīye, Mahalā. III, pp. 1395-96.*

So the word Rehit simply means to practice with mind, speech and deed, the moral and spiritual ideals which are imparted by the Spiritual Guide. Such *Vārs* of Bhāi Gurdās as No. 6, 9, 18, 19, 20, 22, 28, 29, each having 20 to 23 stanzas (*Paurīs*) are nothing but authentic Rehitnāmās, which *Gurmukh* Sikhs or *Gur-Sikhs* of yester years and *Khālsā* of the *Khālsā* Holy Order have followed and must follow all times to come. The *Ādi Gurū Granth* is full of these moral instructions pertaining to the ethical code, but we shall present the testimony of Gurū Rām Dās, Bhāi Gurdās and Bhāi Nañd Lāl, which sum up all that can be said about the Sikh Code of Conduct from Gurū Nānak to the day of founding of the *Khālsā* Holy Order by Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh in 1699 A.D.

#### TESTIMONY OF GURŪ RĀM DĀS

Gurū Rām Dās was the fourth Gurū of the Sikhs, and the founder of the city of Amritsar, known in history as Chak Rām Dās or Rāmdāspur. He preached pure devotion to God, who is the one real Friend of all. He was an Apostle of love, and his writings emphasized on the theme of divine love. When people criticized Sikhism because of leading householder's life, the Gurū said, "A man may wear a Yogi's garb, but without true devotion the Light of God never enters a seeker's heart". He also insisted that "sincere Sikh devotees should contemplate the meaning of the hymns when they recited or sang them, and thus extract the full

## CHAPTER 6

### THE SIKH CODE OF CONDUCT FROM GURŪ NĀNAK TO GURŪ GOBĪND SĪNGH

No living and progressive religion can survive without inner and outer laws or rules of mental, moral, social and spiritual discipline called *Adab* (pl. *ādāb*) by the Ṣūfis and *Rehit* by the Sikhs. When the symbolic features of these laws are taken literally, as less enlightened people tend to do, the result is egoism and bigotry. When the outer discipline is considered as means, and efforts for moral and spiritual exaltation are intensified, the seeker of truth achieves one higher stage after another. Oral instructions of the Gurūs regarding *Rehit* were recorded earlier in *Sākhīs* (Sermons). In some of the recensions of *Ādī Gurū Granth*, written during the time of Gurū Hargobīnd, we have the oldest *Rehitnāmā* recorded on the blank pages, attached to *Ādī Gurū Granth* entitled "Five things a Sikh should do, and Five things he should not do."

The word *Rehit* occurs in more than thirty-five hymns, revealing its importance in *Ādī Gurū Granth*. *Bhaṭṭ* (Bard) Bhikhā, the leaders of the *Bhaṭṭs* contributors to *Ādī Gurū Granth* writes:

*rahio sant hau ṭolī sādḥ bahutere ḍiṭhe.*  
*sannyāsī tapaśīah mukhū e paṇḍit miṭhe.*

In search of one true saint  
I vainly wandered about;  
Recluses, I encountered many,  
Sweet tongued no doubt were they;  
For full one year in this search I wandered.  
None of them gave me the solace of spiritual light.  
I heard them talk a lot of high ideals,

"The Gurū became the disciple and the disciple became the Gurū by exalting him, after putting him to severe tests. From one Supreme Person, a Prophet, another Supreme Person, a Prophet was born. One Light blended with another. The two then became One in Spirit and with two apparent forms."<sup>9</sup>

It is important to grasp this doctrine in order to understand Gurū Gobind Singh's drastic change from Charan Pāhul baptism to baptism of the two-edged sword: Khaṇḍe dī Pāhul. We shall now discuss the Sikh Code of Conduct (*Rehit*) recorded in the Sikh Scriptures and history during the lifetime of the first nine Gurūs and the early life of Gurū Gobind Singh in the next chapter, and show that ethically, theologically, spiritually the Rehit (the Sikh Code of Conduct) was basically the same during early period, as that enunciated by Gurū Gobind Singh, when he created the Khālsā Holy Order to hand over his responsibility as the Gurū to a spiritually and socially organized Religious Order of Universal Community.

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. *Gurdikhyā lai soe Sikh sadāiyā*, Bhāi Gurdās, *Vār*. 3, *Paurī*. 11.
2. Bhāi Gurdās, *Vār*. 28, *Paurī*. 1.
3. *Sabadū Gurū suraṭī dhunī chelā*, Gurū Nānak, *Ādi Gurū Granth*, *Siddha Gosfī*, p. 943.
4. *Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Nānak, *Rāga Rāmkalī*, p. 940.
5. Trilochan Singh, *Gurū Nānak: Founder of Sikhism*, pp. 70-71, quotes from Bālā's *Janam Sākhī*, Litho, p. 89.
6. Barlow, *Essays on Symbolism*, p. 32.
7. *Sau Sākhī*, Sākhī No. 25, Eng Tr. by Sir Attar Singh (British Museum).
8. Kavī Santokh Singh, *Sūraj Parkāsh*, *Ritu*. 1, *Ansū*. 22, verse. 46.
9. There are nearly a dozen quotations on this theme in the *Vārs* of Bhāi Gurdās, notably *Vār*. 9, *Paurīs*. 8, 16.

quite unconcerned about what the Brāhmins and the Mullās did. They had established the New Faith not for confrontation with any religion, but to bring all religions in the spirit of moral and spiritual co-operation in the love of God. But the repeated challenges and threats of the fanatic Hindus and Muslims led to the martyrdom of Gurū Arjan on Jeth Sudī 4, 1663 Bk/May 30, 1606 (Friday) at the age of 48. He was tortured to death by the orders of Emperor Jahāngīr, and his was the first martyrdom for his convictions and faith in the long history of India.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE DISCIPLE EXALTED TO GURŪ  
AND THE GURŪ BECOMING A HUMBLE DISCIPLE  
OF THE ETERNAL

Six months before he passed away from this ephemeral world, Gurū Nānak installed his devoted disciple Lehṇā (Gurū Aṅgad) as his successor and enthroned him on the pontific throne on Asū Vadi 10, 1596 Bk/ September 7, 1539 (Sunday). While performing the ceremony of installation, Gurū Nānak seated Aṅgad on the pontific throne circumambulated three times around him and then prostrated before him in humble submission declaring: "From this day you will initiate disciples, and you sit on the pontific throne while I will remain a disciple." Thus the Founder of Sikhism, Bābā Nānak, installed his disciple as the Gurū: Apostle With Prophetic Mission, and he himself chose to remain a disciple (chelā). The great World-Teacher, who was born as the Gurū, chose to die as the disciple, having created another Nānak, a complete embodiment of his mind, soul and spirit.

Bhāi Gurdās calls this utter humility of the Gurū and this strangely new method of transferring Divine Power as, "making the holy Ganges river run backward from the plains to the mountains." Henceforth every Gurū installed his successor some days or months before his death and acted as the humble disciple of his successor.

Walter Raleigh for making fashionable in his kingdom so vile and stinking a custom as smoking. He wrote, "Have you not reason then to be ashamed and to forbear this filthy novelty, so basely grounded, so foolishly received, and so grossly mistaken in the right to use thereof? If you abuse thereof, sinning against God, harming yourself both in person and goods, and taking also thereby the marks and notes of vanity upon you; by custom thereof, making yourself to be wondered at by all foreign civil nation and by all strangers that come among you, to be scorned and condemned. A custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs, and in the black stinking fume thereof, nearest resembling the horrible stygian smoke of pit that is bottomless."<sup>7</sup>

The cultivation of tobacco was prohibited in England by Charles II in 1684, that is during the lifetime of Gurū Gobind Singh and fifteen years before the Khālsā Holy Order was established. Permission to grow tobacco in England with conditions was granted by the Board of Trade in April 1886. Indulgence in tobacco spread with great rapidity throughout all nations, and that in the face of the most resolute opposition of statesmen and priests, the counterblast of a great monarch, penal enactments of excommunication and even capital punishment.

Tobacco was introduced into India during the reign of Jahāngīr and after the compilation of *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib*. All the three Mughal Emperors Jahāngīr, Shāh Jahān and Aurāngzeb made prohibitory laws against it and strictly prohibited its use in the court, but first secretly and then openly smoking became common. Gurū Gobind Singh wisely made it an act of apostasy, and to this day Sikhs as a community are never found smoking except apostates from Sikhism who have drifted away into either atheism, or some other cult, or have relapsed into a life of promiscuity. A person



having the appearance of a Sikh or one who claims to have adopted Sikhism traditionally or theoretically, if found smoking or taking drugs has absolutely no place in Sikh society. He is not considered Sikh in any sense of the term. It goes to the credit of this community that where the laws of western and eastern rulers have failed to curb or control smoking, the Commandments of Gurū Gobind Singh have been obeyed more scrupulously than any Commandment of Moses has ever been obeyed by Christians or Jews.

Dr David Owen, Minister of State in Britain, said in his speech in the Parliament in January 1976, "Nineteen million people in this country smoke cigarettes; nearly half the adult population, and it is estimated that cigarette smoking is responsible for at least 50,000 pre-mature deaths annually, and great deal of consequential ill-health and suffering. This is because Christian Religion and Christian Churches instead of doing something to prevent it, have patronized it. It is a shameful spectacle that many priests after delivering pious sermons abandon themselves to smoking. If ever a successful movement emerged to curb the control of smoking and use of drugs, it will be from the Churches, Temples, Mosques and Synagogues, and not from the offices of Ministers."<sup>8</sup>

It was heartening to note that many efforts of the U.S.A. government to control smoking has been so successful that there are now a large number of seats reserved in trains, planes and buses for non-smokers.

- (iv) *Eating Meat, Killed According To Muslim Rites Or Other Sacrificial Rites Is An Act Of Apostasy*: In Sikhism, the question of eating meat or being a vegetarian is paradoxical in its interpretation. It is the most reasonable stand from the point of view of social laws and spiritual life, but has been unnecessarily made complicated by those who think that dietary or styles of eating is the most important thing in Sikh religious life. This is not the case. The Sikh Scriptures and the Rehitnāmās are quite

clear on many points.

What puzzles many people is that if meat is permitted, why is meat cut according to Muslim religious rites (*ḥalāl*), which resemble the Jewish *Koscher* (only the Jewish rites are different; the process is the same.) not permitted. Why is it so strongly prohibited that eating *ḥalāl* meat is an act of apostasy?

The main reason for this is that Muslim *ḥalāl* meat (cut according to Muslim rites) was used throughout Muslim Rule in India as a means of conversion of non-Muslims in India. For the same reason the Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists do not eat the *ḥalāl* meat. In Mughal India no one was permitted to slaughter animals for food, any other manner than the one prescribed by the *Kor'ān* and Islāmic Law. Gurū Gobind Singh made it an act of apostasy, and commanded that those disciples who wished to take meat should not submit to this Islāmic law in Aurangzeb's Islāmic State. It was neither essential for a Sikh to take meat, nor to think that mere vegetarianism would make him pious or holy.

Another thing which puzzles many people is that great men in our history and almost all great saints and mystics, without any notable exception, have been strict vegetarians, and have advocated avoidance of meat as diet. Some have even crusaded for avoiding meat for higher spiritual life. The correct position on eating meat is general permissibility, emphasizing tremendous deal of restraint on eating meat. The following points are chief guidelines:

- (i) Almost every food and fruit can be offered as a devotee's offering in Sikh shrines, but meat can never be offered in any form and under any circumstances in a Sikh Shrine.
- (ii) Meat can never be cooked in the precincts of the Sikh temple, or used in the common kitchen as sacramental offering of the *Langar*: Community Kitchen. It is strictly prohibited in the *Langar* (Kitchen cum dinning hall attached to Sikh Shrines).
- (iii) Meat is the only food which saints and mystics, devoted to intense meditations, scrupulously avoid. They do so because it

is avoided in the laṅgar, which indicates that meat is not considered to be a sanctified food under any circumstances.

- (iv) It is wrong to associate physical powers with the use of meat, because history records that such great heroes of Sikh history as Bābā Bāṇḍā Singh Bahādur and Bābā Dīp Singh did not take meat. The *Nihāṅg Jathā* associated with Bābā Dīp Singh still does not take meat to maintain the tradition of their group.
- (v) We have two letters of Gurū Hargobīṇḍ, the sixth Gurū, the first to wear two swords, restraining his followers from eating meat. Probably, the habit of eating meat increased considerably and the Sikh Gurū asked the devotees to restrain from taking meat for religious and spiritual life.
- (vi) While there are verses in the *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib* restraining the Sikhs from taking meat, it is made clear that mere vegetarianism is not the gateway to liberation. It is helpful as a means for a more refined and sober life. So all those who take (as most of the politicians and Sikhs leading purely secular life do these days), are as good Sikhs as the vegetarian Sikhs. God will be impressed by one's devotion, sincerity, purity of heart and not the rich or poor diet, and not a person's vegetarianism and non-vegetarianism. Quite a large number of people who take meat also start taking wine and alcoholic drinks. God and the Eternal Gurū will ultimately judge men by their deeds, their character and their love for humanity and God. God will not judge men by their dietary habits. Yet diet is closely connected with the system which controls the mind, and one has to take care of the diet.
- (vii) One of the basic rules of dietary in Sikhism is that one should not eat what causes pain and sickness to the body, and what upsets and fills the mind with evil thoughts.<sup>7</sup> A food may be good for everybody, but if it harms your body, you should avoid it as a religious duty and responsibility to your body and soul. One should also strictly avoid such food which perverts

your mind and fills your mind with sinful thoughts. You are the best judge for yourself. No hard and fast rules can be applied for a common diet for all human beings.

- (viii) Morally forbidden food for a Sikh is that which is unlawfully acquired; food acquired by money that has been acquired by theft, exploitation of the poor or misappropriation of what belongs to others. Such a food may be apparently good for the body, but it will morally and spiritually ruin a person. Wealth acquired by illegal means of exploiting the labours of others is forbidden and sinful. Sikhs should shun it as Hindus shun beef and Muslims avoid pork. For a Sikh, taking food out of such earning would be like eating human flesh (*murdār khāe*). "Eat only that what you earn by the sweat of the brow."<sup>9</sup> "By putting spices in forbidden food it will not become lawful. Those persons whose Gurū is blind, eat what is morally unlawful for them to eat."<sup>10</sup> "Fools quarrel about eating or not eating meat"<sup>11</sup>. Some people interpret this verse to mean that vegetarians who quarrel about eating meat are fools, while meat-eaters who join the quarrel are wise men. The verse simply means that all those who quarrel about eating or not eating meat and turn their back on real spiritual life are fools. Both meat-eaters and vegetarians who quarrel about it and try to show that they are better Sikhs and more religious by merely eating or not eating meat are fools.

Duncan Greenlees sums up the correct position in *The Gospel of the Gurū Granth Sāhib*, when he says, "All He gives us for our earthly needs is pure. The Gurū does not here advocate that all should eat flesh, but warns us against the superstitious belief that by abstention we can become pure, that spirituality is based on diet, that what goes into man can defile him; and in brief that *mokṣam* depends upon the contents of the stomach. So we have absurd arguments about whether fish or eggs are vegetables; whether eating eggs violates the law of *ahiṃsā*, whether eggs are sensitive to pain and the like, wasting life's precious moments in

childishness instead of learning how to love and worship God. Experience proves that in fact it is perfectly possible for even the foulest eater to tread the highest path in spirituality, while the most punctilious abstainer from flesh..... is not infrequently a very sink of materialism and lust."<sup>12</sup>

Gurū Nānak has rightly stressed that foolish are the people who ignore intense inward devotion to God and debate and quarrel about eating meat, and the guidelines he gives are most appropriate:

*Bābā horū khāṇā khusī khuārū.*

*jīti khādhai tanū pīṛiai man mehi chaliḥ vikār.*

Listen O seers, if you eat

That which causes sickness in your body,

Or that which disturbs your mind with evil thoughts,

It will lead to unhappiness.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Nānak, Srī Rāga, p. 16.*

I would like to stress once more that saints and mystics of all faiths, even Muslims and Christians have generally given up eating meat. Eating meat is sometimes associated with improved mental ability. The eminent Ṣūfī Saint Malik ibn Dinār (D 728 A.D.) once said; "I do not know the meaning of the statement that if a man does not eat meat for forty days, his intelligence is diminished. I have not eaten meat for twenty years, and my intelligence increases everyday."<sup>13</sup>

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Lāmā Anagarika Govinda, *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*, pp. 18-19.
2. For details of Baptism Ceremony see:
  - (i) Koer Singh, *Gurbilās Pātshāhī Das, Adhāya. 9.*
  - (ii) Kesar Singh Chhibber, *Bansāvalināmā, Adhāya. 10*
  - (iii) Sarūp Dās Bhallā, *Mehmā Parkāsh, Sākhī. 22, (Pātshāhī Das).*
  - (iv) Sukhā Singh, *Gurbilās Pātshāhī Das, Adhāya. 11.*

(v) Kavi Saināpati, *Gursobhā Granth*.

3. Bhāi Gurdās, "Vāhi-Gurū Gurmantar hai jap haumai khoi," *Vār*. 13, *Paurī*. 2.
4. The whole of *Anandū Sāhib* should be recited both in the baptism ceremony and prayers. S.G.P.C has shortened it by reading only the first five *paurīs* and the last one. This is not permissible and is against tradition and historical facts. The whole of *Japujī*, *Jāpū* and *Anandū* are to be read both in the prayers and baptism ceremony.
5. Nūr Muḥammed, *Jaṅgnāmāh*, p. 160.
6. The Sikh Scriptures and *Rehitnāmās*, translated in this book give strict injunctions against drinking wine.
7. Maurice Corina, *Trust in Tobacco*, p. 33.
8. Health Educational Council's Reports, 1973-75.  
Dr David Owen's speech in the British Parliament, January 1976.
9. *Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Nānak, *Rāga Gūjarī*, p.141.
10. Ibid., *Mājh kī Vār*, p.489.
11. Ibid., *Vār Malār*, p.1289.
12. Duncan Greenlees, *The Gospel of Gurū Granth Sāhib*, p. 135.
13. Arberry A.J., *Muslim Saints and Mystics*, p. 30.

1997

## *Part Three*

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*Authentic Moral Code Of  
The Khālsā Holy Order:  
Rehitnāmās.*



If one lives according to the Gurū's *Rehit*

His evil propensities: *Bikārā*

Gradually diminish and disappear.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Arjan, *Rāga Gaurī*, p. 259.

He alone is my true Sikh,

Who lives according to moral Laws: *Rehit*.

Know him to be my Master.

I am a humble disciple of such a Sikh.

He, who does not live according to moral laws,

Has no right to call himself a Sikh.

The blows on his fate keep on knocking at his door.

He, who lives not according to the rules of Sikh moral laws,

Can never know peace and happiness.

So everyone should live according to these moral laws,

And thoroughly imbibe the spirit of moral and spiritual life.

Gurū Gobind Singh's Concept of a True Sikh,

*Rehitnāmā Bhāi Desā Singh.*

## CHAPTER 10

# HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS ON THE MORAL CODE OF THE SIKHS: *REHITNĀMĀS*

### THE MEANING OF *REHIT*: SIKH MORAL LAWS

The word *Rehit* occurs in the *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib* a number of times, and everywhere it means precepts for moral and spiritual life. No exalted spiritual state can be achieved without a thorough moral, spiritual and disciplined living. There is a social and cultural code for the externals of a religion, and then there is a *Sukhsam Rehit*, the subtle techniques, rules and ways, meditation and contemplation. There is a discipline for inner living, which is much more difficult to follow scrupulously than any rules for externals. This inner discipline may differ from person to person in its working. Some saints devote themselves to *Kīrtan*, others to theological interpretation of scriptures: *Kathā*, and yet there are others who do not pay much attention to these things, but are whole-heartedly devoted to social service of humanity: *Sewā*, or building and constructing holy places and helping the pilgrims: *Kār Sewā*. All these orthodox Sikh Saints follow the basic *Khālsā* external and internal Code of Conduct. But there are others who imitate them and parade false piety after their death. They enhance their importance by pretending to be spiritual successors of these saints, but it has generally been seen that they imitate the saints in externals and try to build a cult around the saint by introducing disruptionist activities. The true Sikh saints and devoted disciples of the Gurūs lay more emphasis on inner life and are never proud and vain about their external perfectionism.

Correct interpretation of the Fundamental Rehit (Precepts of Living) can be done only in the framework and light of authentic tradition, historical documents and the Sikh Scriptures. Laxity in observing Rehit (moral and spiritual precepts), or such dogmatic observation of externals, which separates inner life from outwardly pious life, leads to disastrous results. Laxity ends in immoral life of a libertine, while dogmatism in externals which ignores inner spiritual life, ends in dangerous fanaticism, bigotry and spiritual degradation.

### GURŪ GOBĪND SĪNGH DEFINES 'KĤĀLSĀ' AND HIS MORAL AND SPIRITUAL CHARACTER

The *Tetī Sawāīye* of Gurū Gobīnd Sīng, found in the *Dasam Granth*, are actually a Rehitnāmā of the KĤālsā, giving us from the pen of the Creator of KĤālsā a vivid portrayal of the personality of the KĤālsā, which his baptism of the Two-Edged Sword created. Unfortunately, like many other compositions of Gurū Gobīnd Sīng, this is also incomplete. Later on some of the missing verses have been included in the *Sarb Loh Granth*. The first verse of this composition gives the character and the moral idealism of the KĤālsā:

*jāgat jotī japaī nis bāsur*  
*ek binā man naik na ānai.*

Awake to the Eternal Light: *Jyoti*  
Meditating day and night,  
The Name of the Lord.  
Having no faith in any deity except the One Lord.  
Absorbed in His splendour,  
Absorbed in His love.  
Even in error, never believing  
In fasts and worship of tombs,  
Nor cloisters of idolatry  
Caring not even for bathing in holy places,

Nor for penances of *Yogīs*,  
 Nor for asceticism of *Sannyāsīs*,  
 Know such a child of Light,  
 Such a paragon, such a complete man,  
 In whose heart ever shines  
 The Perfect Light of God,  
 To be the *Khālsā*.

*Dasam Granth*, Gurū Gobīnd Singh, *Tetī Sawāīye*, 1, p.712.

In this and other verses of this composition, Gurū Gobīnd Singh gives the following moral and spiritual qualities of the *Khālsā*:

- (1) The *Khālsā* has no faith in god or goddesses except the One God.
- (2) He contemplates the Name of God inwardly day and night.
- (3) He is spiritually exalted, and the Light of God ever shines in his heart.
- (4) He is awake to God's Eternal Presence, and as child of Light, he worship the Eternal Light.
- (5) He walks on the Path of Love, seeking communion with God.
- (6) The *Khālsā* should not pay homage to tombs, *samādhīs*, graves of saints for seeking spiritual blessings.
- (7) He does not believe in idolatry and image worship.
- (8) He does not go to Hindu places of pilgrimage for salvation: *muktī*.
- (9) He does not practice yoga *āsanas* and other feats of penance associated with yoga of any sort.
- (10) He does not indulge in ascetic practices of *Sannyāsīs*: Hindu Monks.

Other verses of this composition emphasize the following points:

- (11) God is all-pervading, and He can be realized only in the poised *samādhī* of the Essence of Truth: *Tat Samādhī*.
- (12) *Vedas* and *Kor'ān* have not known His limits, *Siddhas* and *Yogīs* have not seen His Light in their *samādhīs*. Contemplate His

- Name to realize Him and attain His Presence. (verses 4-10)
- (13) Love the Creator in your heart. Do not try to find Him in worshipping prophets (*avalārs*) as God. Just as Hindus worship Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. God is not be found in the narrow confines of temples and mosques. No prophet, however great, is God Himself. (verse 14)
  - (14) So do not turn your back on the One and the Only God, and do not turn to the worship of many gods and goddesses: *ek ko chādī anek bhajai*.
  - (15) Do not have any faith in Brāhmanical, Vaiṣṇava and Śaive deities. (verse 16)
  - (16) Pay no attention to Yogīs and their different yoga cults. They smear their bodies, keep matted hair and put on many types of holy robes. For greed, lust and cheap popularity, they wander from door to door. Their hearts are empty, and their samādhīs are sham. The true Religion is the religion of love.
  - (17) Follow not pious looking hypocritical saints who are actually *thugs* in holy robes. (verse 10)
  - (18) Penance carried on for years yields no result without true devotion to God.
  - (19) Follow not the *Masānds* (disbanded Sikh missionaries), who have become pitiless exploiters. They are selfish, greedy and merciless exploiters of innocent people.

BHĀI DAYĀ SĪNGH'S REHITNĀMĀ:  
MORAL CODE OF THE KHĀLSĀ

Bhāi Dayā Sīngh was the first of the *Pañj Piārās* to offer his head as a sacrifice when Gurū Gobīnd Sīngh gave a call for the highest sacrifice. He was amongst those Five who received the *Amrit* baptism of the Khālsā Holy Order. He received the highest illumination from the Gurū. His *Rehitnāmā* was obviously written after the death of Gurū Gobīnd Sīngh. It elucidates the basic ideals of the Khālsā, and urges a complete break with Brāhmanical faith

and Muslim cults, which were exploiting Hindu and Muslim masses with pretensions to occult power. The following is a translation of an authentic version:

- (1) A Sikh of the Gurū should not have any faith in *Maths*: Brāhmaṇical Monasteries, idols, pilgrimage to holy rivers, gods and goddesses, fasts, Brāhmaṇical ceremonies of image worship (*pūjā and arhcā*), nor should he believe in *tantra*, *mantra* and *yantra* of the Tāntric Yoga, nor should he go to Brāhmins and *Pirs* for amulets, talisman, or seeking omens, nor submit to the Hindu sacrament of *Gāyatrī* and *Tarpanā*.
- (2) He is the *Khālsā*, who has dedicated his body, mind and wealth to the Supreme Being and for the righteous cause.
- (3) A Sikh should not wear the sacred thread of the Hindus: *Janeū*. He should not perform the ceremonies of birth and death according to Hindu rites, nor should he perform the ceremony of feeding Brāhmins for the salvation of ancestors. He should not perform marriage according to the *Vedic* or Brāhmaṇical rites. He should perform all ceremonies according to the discipline of the Gurūs (*Gur-maryādā*) by offering prayers (*Ardāsa*) before the Lord in the Presence of *Ādi Gurū Granth*.
- (4) A Sikh should render whatever help he can to all who come to him in the time of need.
- (5) He should visit the Temple of the Gurū (*Gurdwārā*) daily, and on the way to the temple, walk with restraint and reverence.
- (6) If no one offers his daughter in marriage to a devout Sikh youngman simply because he is poor, or for some other such reason, he should willingly offer his daughter to such a person.
- (7) To kill infant daughters, or to give in marriage one's daughter to a clean-shaven man out of greed is a serious religious offence.

- (8) When a Sikh offers his daughter in marriage to a devout Sikh, it is like nectar mingling with nectar.
- (9) When a Sikh (*Khālsā*) gives his daughter to a clean-shaven non-Sikh, it is like putting nectar into the mouth of a snake.
- (10) A Sikh should prefer white, yellow, blue, grey colours for turbans or clothes.

*Author's Note:* The red colour used these days by Communists for their flags is called *sūhā rang*, which is discouraged because in the Sikh Scriptures it is symbol of unstable, immoral character and materialistic living. The red colour of the rose is appreciated as it symbolizes spiritual radiance. There is no hard and fast rule for people leading a purely worldly life, but religious people generally prefer white, yellow, blue, grey and black.

- (11) A Sikh should consider all other rich or poor Sikhs his brothers in faith.
- (12) He who has treachery and insincerity in his heart is doomed to perdition.
- (13) To accept offerings or amulets from Pirs and followers of Muslim cult leaders like Sakhī Sarwar (Sayyid Ahmed) whose cult indulged in magic and occult feats) is a breach of religious discipline.
- (14) He who puts on sacred marks of the Hindus on his forehead (*Tilak*), or wears rosary of wooden beads of *Vairāgi* sects, commits a breach of discipline.
- (15) Whenever any communal or national decision is to be taken, five Sikhs living according to *Khālsā* Moral Code (*Rehit*) should take decision on what is right and what is wrong in Moral living: *Rehit-bibek*. The *Gurmattā*: Collective Decision of the Assembly of the Sikh divines, should be accepted as final.

*Author's Note:* This commandment or tradition strikes at the root of all dictatorships in religious, cultural and political

## Institutions.

- (16) The drawers should be upto knees and not lower than the knees.
- (17) The kitchen should be plastered with clay and not with cow-dung according to Brāhmaṇical rites.
- (18) A Sikh should disregard all Hindu-Muslim prejudices or dominant cultural influences of Hindu or Muslim rulers and societies.
- (19) *Ekādaśī* fasts of the Hindus should not be kept by the Sikhs.
- (20) The Sikhs should perform marriage rites according to the Sikh *Anand*-marriage ceremony (*Lāwān*) and not according to *Vedic* rites.
- (21) A Sikh should always remain in military preparedness, and keep his horse and weapons with care and alertness.
- (22) He who employs the Brāhmins to perform marriage and death ceremony according to Hindu rites, commits serious breach of discipline of the *Khālsā* Moral Code and should be given penitentiary punishment.

*Author's Note:* The foregoing *Rehitnāmā* is translation of the text found in British Museum. There are some printed versions of the same and now available. But I recently found a Manuscript in which the following additional instructions are recorded, and it indicates that the original text was more comprehensive. The additional points are:

- (23) There are four types of Sikhs:
  - (i) Those who become Sikhs for commercial motives: *Dhande dī Sikhī*.
  - (ii) Those who accept Sikhism formally only to imitate Sikhs for material gains and to exploit Sikhism: *Bhekh dī Sikhī*.
  - (iii) Those who become Sikhs for personal or family ambitions, be they religious, social or political: *Hirsī Sikh*.
  - (iv) Sikhs who are dedicated and sincere in faith: *Sidqī Sikh*.



- (24) One should not tell a lie; one should not associate (sexually) with women other than one's legal wife.
- (25) One should discard lust, anger, egoism, calumny, and violence (*himsā*) of all types. *Himsā* means wilfully harming other people.
- (26) A Sikh should be sweet of speech, and he should never hurt anyone's feelings. He should remain pure and sincere at heart and never harm anyone.
- (27) One should pay his tithes for the cause of Gurū, and always share his surplus income with the needy and help them in every way. While one lives according to the Commandments of the Gurū, he should not be vain or be proud of it.
- (28) Sikh should not visit a society or place where one forgets God and the great divine Teachers. Such a society should be discreetly avoided.
- (29) A Sikh should not be a glutton, nor should he waste food. He should neither talk much nor sleep much. He should bring home his earning by honest labour, and help the Sikh devotees and serve them. He should consider God and the Gurū as the Supreme Giver.
- (30) A Sikh should avoid five activities:
  - (i) stealing, coveting or misappropriating other people's property.
  - (ii) coveting other people's wives.
  - (iii) scandalizing others for personal reasons.
  - (iv) gambling.
  - (v) drinking wine.
- (31) A person who has drifted away from Sikhism should be guided to the right path. One should not harm or hurt them if they can still be guided to the right path.
- (32) A Sikh should be judged not by his material possessions and wealth, but by his life of meditation (*Nām Simrīn*: Remembrance of God), and his moral spiritual life.
- (33) A Sikh should tie his hair on the top centre of the head. He

should wear bigger turban and keep his head covered. He should comb his hair twice; early in the morning and before going to bed. He should shampoo his hair every fourth day.

- (34) Gurū Gobīnd Singh said, "If anyone from any faith or creed, or from any of the four castes accepts Amrit baptism, he should be treated as my living embodiment: *Oh merā sarūp hai.*"
- (35) Sikhs should contemplate the *Gurū-mantra*: *Vāhi-Gurū* in the following manner: Inhale your breath and say *Vāh* with it, and when you exhale your breath, say *Gurū* with it.
- (36) Gurū Gobīnd Singh said, "It is not the outward form or dress that is dear to me, but the moral and spiritual living of Sikh that I admire: *rehit pyārī moko Sikh piārā nahī.*"

#### BHĀI NAṆD LĀL'S REHITNĀMĀ: MORAL CODE OF THE KHĀLSĀ HOLY ORDER

Before Bhāi Naṇd Lāl met Gurū Gobīnd Singh near about the year 1694, he was *Mīr Munṣī* of Aurangzeb's heir to the Mughal throne, Prince Mu'azzam, later known as Bahādur Shāh. Earlier he was *Nāib Sūbedār* of Multān. He was a great Persian poet, strongly influenced by Rūmī and Ḥāfiz, whom he frequently quotes. When he met Gurū Gobīnd Singh, he became his most devoted disciple and the poet Laureate of his *darbār*. We have already quoted one Rehitnāmā of the Sikhs, which was under force when Sikhs were baptized by *Charan Pāhul* ceremony; baptism of Lotus Feet. This Rehitnāmā is called *Tankhāhnāmā*: Disciplinary Punishment for Moral Offences; literal translation, Wages of Sins. Bhāi Naṇd Lāl was also incharge of one of the major Community Kitchen at Anandpur. So we have an unpublished document giving us some of the details and Rules for *Gurū kā Langar*, (Open-Kitchen), offering food to everyone free. We shall be quoting from this documents also.

Some body wrote a third *Rehitnāmā* in the name of Bhāi Nañd Lāl, published by Dr W. H. McLeod along with his version of Chaupā Singh's *Rehitnāmā*. This is not *Rehitnāmā* of Bhāi Nañd Lāl, but has been written in his name. The very language, expression and style reveals that the great poet never wrote it. Bhāi Nañd Lāl never wrote any prose except in his letters. Every thing he wrote was in poetry, bubbling with the light and life. This is sufficient to establish that the third *Rehitnāmā* written in the name of Bhāi Nañd Lāl is an act of impersonation to prepare a spurious document.

- (1) Bhāi Nañd Lāl asked Gurū Gobiñd Singh, "Tell us Master, what are the deeds a Sikh should do and what are the deeds which the *Khālsā* should not do?"
- (2) Listen Nañd Lāl, the fundamental moral and spiritual deeds of Sikh should be:

*Nām-Simrīn*: Contemplation of the Divine Name.

*Dān*: Charity.

*Isnān*: Bathing the body with water and the mind with Divine Word.

- (3) He who does not seek the company of congregation of the Seekers of Truth or while sitting in the congregation allows his mind to wander, commits a serious moral offence.
- (4) He who indulges in useless talk while services in the Sikh temple are going on, commits a moral offence. And he who talks in the congregation about anything other than the Divine Word gains nothing.
- (5) He who does not show proper respect and reverence to Holy *Ādi Granth* can never attain Enlightenment.
- (6) He who, while distributing sacramental food, shows greed, continually suffers mental agony.
- (7) This is the way sacramental offering (*karāh prāsād*) should be prepared. Clean the utensils and the fire place, and take equal quantity of three ingredients. One who prepares it must take bath, and while preparing it must continually

utter the Name of God. He should use fresh and clean water. After preparing it in this way, it should be placed on a low table (*chaukī*) near the altar.

- (8) He who offers allegiance to the seal of the Usurpers of Freedom (Turks and Despots, as they were called) and he who submits himself to any Hindu superstition, he shall suffer the agony of rebirth in the cycle of animal births.
- (9) It is undesirable not to go to the congregation for service, or distribute sacramental food without living according to the Sikh Code of Conduct.
- (10) He who looks at women coming to the congregation with an evil eye is doomed. He who abandons himself to anger, or accepts money for giving his daughter in marriage to someone, and he who cheats pilgrims, his religious worship and prayers are of no avail. He suffers the cycle of birth and death in lower animal lives.
- (11) Every Sikh should comb his hair twice daily, keep his teeth clean and tie his turban afresh every time he takes it off.
- (12) Trust not a person who tells lies or gives nothing in charity out of his earnings.
- (13) Blasphemous is the life of a Sikh:
  - (i) Who does not perform ablution and morning prayers, nor does he perform evening prayers, nor sleeps without saying Bed-time prayer.
  - (ii) Who backbites.
  - (iii) Who gives up righteousness.
  - (iv) Who does not fulfil his promise.
- (14) He who takes meat from a Muslim, cut according to Muslim rites, commits an act of apostasy.
- (15) He who listens to extremely profane songs is morally doomed.
- (16) Such a person will not receive any honour in the Court of God:
  - (i) Who starts, nay work without invocation prayers.

- (ii) Who never offers anything in charity.
- (iii) Who puts on the garb of a mendicant and goes about begging.
- (iv) Who commits adultery and covets other people's wives.
- (v) Who does not offer anything to the needy.
- (17) He will suffer endlessly:
  - (i) Who does not attend to the services, while in the temple.
  - (ii) Who cheats in his dealings.
- (18) He will suffer in hell:
  - (i) Who misuses religious funds of the temples and other religious and cultural Institutions for his own ends.
  - (ii) Who cheats people in his dealings with them.
- (19) He who visits prostitutes or covets other people's wives is not a Sikh.
- (20) He who goes about naked or performs any religious duties with uncovered head and body; he who wanders about in the streets bare-headed or eats his food with head uncovered commits serious offence against moral discipline.

#### CHARACTER OF THE KHĀLSĀ

*Khālsā soi jo nīdā tiāgai.*

*Khālsā soi larai hoi āgai.*

He is the Khālsā who gives up calumny.

He is the Khālsā who fights in the forefront.

He is the Khālsā who destroys the five passions.

He is the Khālsā who burns his past *karma*.

He is the Khālsā who renounces pride.

He is the Khālsā who keeps away from undesirable women.

He is the Khālsā who covets not other people's wealth.

He is the Khālsā who is absorbed in His Name.

He is the Khālsā who is devoted to the Word of the Gurū.

He is the Khālsā who is prepared to encounter

The sword of the enemy courageously.

Knowing the people (*khalaq*) to be creatures of God (*khālaq*)  
 Let no one cause sorrow and suffering to the people.  
 He who wilfully tyrannizes over the people  
 Will be destroyed by the wrath of God:

He is the Khālsā who helps the poor.  
 He is the Khālsā who destroys oppressors.  
 He is the Khālsā who contemplates the Name of God.  
 He is the Khālsā who attacks the wicked people.  
 He is the Khālsā who is absorbed in His presence.  
 He is the Khālsā who keeps a war horse.  
 He is the Khālsā who is ever ready for the battle.  
 He is the Khālsā who destroys oppressors.  
 The drums of the glory of God will beat.  
 No one will dare to abuse and insult God.  
 The trees and mountains will ring with His Name.  
 The three worlds will sing His glory.<sup>1</sup>

SOVEREIGN SPIRIT OF THE KHĀLSĀ:

*Rāj KAREGĀ KHĀLSĀ*

*Suṇo Nañd Lāl eho säch, pargaṭ karāūn āpno rāj.  
 Chār barn ik barn karāūn. Vāhigurū kā jāp japāūn.*

Listen, Nañd Lāl, We declare the Truth:  
 We shall in time establish our Sovereignty,  
 We shall blend four castes into one,  
 We shall inspire people to utter the Name of God.  
 We shall ride the steeds of freedom.  
 We shall fly the falcon of royal sovereignty,  
 Seeing which the oppressors shall fade away.  
 I shall make one Sikh strong enough  
 To fight a hundred thousands,  
 I will exalt the Khālsā spiritually.  
 When they fight relentlessly for righteousness,  
 The spears of glorious victory will arise aloft;  
 The royal elephants shall carry fluttering flags,

Then thousands of cannons will be fired for freedom.  
The Khālsā shall be victorious from east to west.

The Khālsā shall be free and sovereign, and will rule.  
No one will dare to resist its mighty power.  
After suffering from internal conflicts all shall unite.  
He alone shall be saved who takes refuge in His Presence.<sup>2</sup>

#### RULES FOR CONDUCTING *LAṄGAR*: COMMUNITY KITCHEN AND DINNING

These words were addressed to Bhāi Naṇd Lāl by Gurū Gobīnd Singh:

- (1) The kitchen should be clean, and clean and fresh water should be acquired.
- (2) Shoes, dogs or birds like crows etc. should not be allowed to enter the kitchen.
- (3) No stale vegetable, and nothing having any dirt and no unclean thing should be used.
- (4) The mind should be in peace and without prejudice for anyone.
- (5) No one addicted to drinks, or no one eating meat should be allowed to prepare *Gurū kā Laṅgar*: Food of the Community Kitchen.
- (6) No meat of any kind should be used in *Gurū kā Laṅgar*:  
“*bakrā jhaṭkā bich kare; avar mās nah laṅgar dhare.*”

*Author's Note:* Meat-eaters were prohibited from preparing *Laṅgar* for fear that they may wilfully introduce meat into *Laṅgar* just as some Nihāṅg *Jathās* have introduced not only meat but even marijuana: *bhaṅg*, which they erroneously call *sukh-niddhān*. This has been their undoing. Ninety percent of the present day Nihāṅgs have lost their self-respect, their religious and spiritual dignity, and their will to contribute something solid to the cause of the Sikh community.

- (7) Tobacco, *bhaṅg* (marijuana leaves) and those who use them

should be kept away from the place, where Gurū-kā Laṅgar is prepared.

- (8) All food prepared in the Community Kitchen should first be offered to the Gurū through prayer. Then it becomes sacramental food.
- (9) All people— rich or poor, high or low, men and women should be asked to sit in a row. There should be no discrimination of caste, colour or faith.
- (10) Food should be distributed equally to everyone without favouring the rich and high. Equal respect and equal treatment should be given to all.

#### REHITNĀMĀ OF BHĀI DESĀ SINGH

Bhāi Desā Singh was son of the great Sikh martyr Bhāi Manī Singh. We hear of one Bhāi Desā Singh, who lived in Amritsar and Paṭnā Sāhib for sometime. I cannot say whether the two were the same or different persons. Both were contemporaries of Gurū Gobind Singh, if they were different. The following is the translation of the Rehitnāmā:

- (1) The primary rule of the Sikh Path is that the Sikh should get baptized according to the Amrit baptism of the Two-Edged Sword.
- (2) A Sikh should get baptized by five Sikhs, who are found competent to baptize, and whatever Rehit (Code of Conduct) they enunciate, it should be strictly followed.
- (3) The Sikhs should keep away from those, who kill infant daughters. They should be socially boycotted and given penitentiary punishment, if they wish to be accepted in Sikh society. One should devote himself to the reading and understanding of the Sikh Scriptures and discard back-biting and calumny.
- (4) Let a Sikh continuously utter Vāhi-Gurū. Let him enshrine the Name, Vāhi-Gurū ever in his heart. One should greet



others saying: "*Vāhi-Gurū jī-kā Khālsā, Vāhi-Gurū jī-kī Fateh*: The *Khālsā* is of the Almighty Lord; Victory ever is of God: *Vāhi-Gurū*."

- (5) A Sikh should bring home earning, which is earned by the sweat of his brow (lit. by the ten nails of his hands). He should give tithes for the humanitarian cause of the Gurū.
- (6) He is a disciplined Sikh (*Rehitvān Sikh*) of the Gurū, who considers other people's daughters to be his own daughters, and considers other people's wives as his sisters or mothers (if elderly), and is attached to his own wife.
- (7) A Sikh should never renounce the ethical principles of moral enlightenment according to the established Code of Conduct: *Rehit-bibek*. In the battlefield he should fight face to face with the enemy and never run away from the battlefield. The *Khālsā* is the image of the Gurū (prophet), serving whom supreme happiness is obtained.
- (8) Let a Sikh take up farming, trade and work of artisan or any other job that suits his tastes. Let him take up a profession in which he has acquired proficiency, and with determination and efficiency do his work. He should never indulge in theft or exploitation of another's labours.
- (9) Prostitutes, street-walkers, characterless women, who loiter about in lust hunger should be discreetly avoided. A Sikh should not bestow his affection on any undesirable woman. If he does so he will suffer. So a man of divine knowledge should keep away from them.
- (10) A Sikh should completely discard:
  - (i) *Hukā*: (*hookā*) a tobacco pipe in which smoke is drawn through water and a long tube (Mughal Style Pipe).
  - (ii) *Kuṭhā*: meat cut according to Muslim rites.
  - (iii) *Charas*: exudation of flowers of hemp collected with the dew and prepared for use as intoxicating drug.
  - (iv) *Tambācoo*: tobacco
  - (v) *Gānjā*: hemp plant (*cannabis sativa*); the leaves and

young buds of the hemp plant. The frutification when nearly ripe is bruised and smoked in order to produce intoxication, the dried leaves are ground and mixed with water and drunk for the same purpose; in this later stage it is called *bhaṅg*.

He who never touches these drugs is a devout and disciplined Sikh.

- (11) Let a Sikh never go about without weapons. He should be ever ready in defence preparedness.
- (12) A Sikh should not eat any such food, which has been partly eaten by *Sannyāsins*, *Vairāgīs*, *Udāsīs*, *Yogīs*, *Jangams*, or *Tāntric Yogīs* (*Śakṛī* Cult). Most of these Hindu mendicants used to order large quantity of food and take some food out of it, and give the remains of their plate called (*jūṭh*) to their disciples. The Sikhs were prohibited from eating such leavings (*jūṭh*) of any holy man.
- (13) Let a Sikh learn from another Sikh *Gurmukhī* letters i.e. reading and writing the Puṁjābī language and script of major Sikh Scriptures. If he can learn any other language or acquire any other system of knowledge to broaden his intellectual acquaintance, he should do it.
- (14) A Sikh should memorize hymns both from *Ādi Gurū Granth* and *Dasam Granth*.
- (15) On auspicious days like the birthday or the ascension day of Gurū Nānak, a Sikh should prepare some sacramental food and Laṅgar and feed other people.
- (16) A Sikh who is rich and wealthy should look to the needs of those who are poor and destitute. If he sees a person from far off country or lands, he should willingly extend his hospitality towards him.
- (17) A Sikh should be courteous and sweet of speech and give opportunities of employment to his brother Sikhs. All Sikhs should live in fellowship and love, remove all ill-feelings from amongst them.

- (18) A Sikh should shun these five evils: (i) adultery, (ii) gambling. (iii) lies and falsehood, (iv) theft, (v) wine.
- (19) Once in a battlefield, a Sikh warrior should never run away, but like a true Sikh he should fight unto death.
- (20) He should never give up humility and courteous behaviour. He should discreetly avoid the company of mischievous people.
- (21) Let a Sikh reduce day by day the passions of lust, wrath, greed, pride and vanity. He should never tell a lie and discipline himself in humility, righteousness and ethical wisdom: *vivek* or *bibek*.
- (22) A Sikh should consider wealth, material happiness, political power, children, wife, knowledge to be gifts of God and the Gurū, and should not be proud of them.
- (23) A Sikh should never act as a false witness, nor should he take bribe, nor should he fail to do justice.
- (24) A Sikh should never speak disparagingly of other religious paths or creeds in the world.
- (25) Food should be taken in a clean place and with clean hands. None should take his meals without sharing it with others.
- (26) A disciplined Sikh (*Rehitoān*) should take his meals from his own earnings, and never under any circumstances use money from temple offerings or charitable funds. This is the greatest sin.
- (27) If a Sikh is posted as a priest of a temple and permitted to use temple offerings for his livelihood, he should take only the amount absolutely necessary for his needs. All surplus money should be used for charitable purposes.
- (28) A Sikh should disassociate himself from those persons who have committed acts of apostasy. He should live in peace and joy of his righteous and disciplined living.
- (29) He who lives according to the Gurū's Code of Conduct

(Rehit), shall ever abide in the Divine Presence of the Gurū in this life and even after death.

(30) Gurū Gobīnd Singh gave a lasting assurance:

He alone is my true Sikh,  
Who lives according to Moral Laws: *Rehit*.  
Know him to be my Master.  
I am a humble disciple of such a Sikh.  
He who does not live according to Moral Laws  
Has no right to call himself a Sikh.  
The blows on his fate keep on knocking at his door.  
He who lives not according to the Rules of Sikh Moral Laws  
Can never know peace and happiness.  
So everyone should live according to these Moral Laws,  
And thoroughly imbibe the spirit of moral and spiritual life.

(31) The hair is the ornament of human personality. To have beard and hair is to accept naturally what God has given us. A person without hair is like a bird without wings. He is like woman without ornaments. Only with the hair the human personality is complete.

(32) The author says that he saw Gurū Gobīnd Singh in his mystical vision. This was the period when *Dasam Granth* was being compiled. Bhāi Desā Singh says that in his mystical vision Gurū Gobīnd Singh gave him the following message which he honestly records:

*Spake Gurū Gobīnd Singh:*

“Listen Desā Singh to what I say: First, I composed the *Jāpī*, then *Akāl Ustāī*. Consider these compositions to be like *Vedas*: Book of Divine Wisdom. Then I composed *Bachitar Nāṭak*, in which I described the Soḍhī Family’s history. Then I composed *Chaṇḍī Charitar* in various types of poetic forms. Then I wrote *Gyān Prabodh*, the recitation of which inspires a person to reach the highest spiritual state. I composed the history of 24 *Avatārs* of Viṣṇu, and of

Śiva like Dattātreya. Then I composed *Śabad Hazāre* and *Triyā Charitar*. I have also written much on the Rehit of the Khālsā." (128-138).

*Author's Note:* This statement of an eminent contemporary of the Gurū strongly indicates that all the writings of *Dasam Granth* were written by Gurū Gobiṇd Singh, and there is no truth in the misleading and sweeping statements of some of the writers in the recent past that: (i) The history of *Dasam Granth* is non-existent; (ii) Bhāi Manī Singh did not compile *Dasam Granth*; (iii) *Dasam Granth* cannot be regarded as composition of Gurū Gobiṇd Singh; (iv) there is no contemporary or near-contemporary record to support that *Dasam Granth* is the composition of Gurū Gobiṇd Singh etc.<sup>3</sup> There is no doubt that copyists have corrupted some texts.

#### REHITNĀMĀ OF BHĀI CHAUPĀ SINGH

Chaupā Singh belonged to the Chhiber family, which served seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth Gurūs as Ministers of their *durbār*. The printed version of Bhāi Chaupā Singh's Rehitnāmā is a short one with about 20 instructions. The *Nirmalā* scholar Paṇḍit Tārā Singh Narotam says, he saw a bigger version. Kesar Singh Chhiber, who belongs to this family says there were 1800 instructions included in it. Now I have seen two copies, one now available in Sikh Reference Library. The colophon indicates that scribe Blākā Singh wrote it and it was made larger version by Gurbaksh Singh, son of Dharam Chaṇd, treasurer of Gurū Gobiṇd Singh. This is a condensed translation of the larger and short version. Basically they are the same. The following are the major Moral Instructions of this Rehitnāmā:

- (1) Righteous living according to the moral and spiritual laws of the Sikh Gurūs (Rehit) helps a devotee to steadily get rid

of his shortcomings, evil habits and sinful ways: *Rehit rehit reh jāhe bikarā*.<sup>4</sup>

- (2) Both baptized Khālsā Sikhs (*Keśādhārī*) and Unbaptized Novices, who choose to remain lay devotees for indefinite period, (*Sahajdhārīs*: lit those who adopt Sikhism gradually and slowly), should get up early in the morning and either take a bath, or in case of some difficulty perform ablution *pañj-īsnānā*: washing the five; two hands, two feet and face. Then it is the command of Gurū Rām Dās to recite *Japujī* five times along with other prayers. After that he should go to the Sikh temple, then known as *Dharamsālā*, now known as Gurdwārā. In the temple, he should offer either flowers, fruit or even a penny or half penny, whatever one can easily afford. This offering goes for distributing sacramental food to the people.
- (3) A Sikh should never drink wine. By drinking wine a man loses his mental balance. Both baptized Sikhs and Sahajdhārīs should not take any wine or drugs.
- (4) A Sikh should never have illegal sex relations with other people's wives.
- (5) A Sikh should never have social relations with those who kill infant daughters. A Sikh should marry his daughter to a baptized Sikh, irrespective of his social position and disregarding caste prejudice. It is a sin to take either dowry or money for giving a daughter in marriage.
- (6) A novice or a person who wishes to adopt Sikhism should be baptized when he has fully grown his hair and when he has fully disciplined himself in the moral and spiritual rules of living.
- (7) A Sikh should comb his hair well. Hair (*Keśās*) is the seal of the distinct personality and religious identity of the Khālsā Sikh. While hair is absolutely essential for a baptized Sikh, the Khālsā Sikhs should not be vain and conceited about it. It is an external symbol to inspire dignity, humility and

spirituality. While keeping hair (Keśās), sword (*Kīrpān*), one should consider contemplation of God's Name, recitation of hymns, and companionship of the Saints absolutely essential and indispensable.

- (8) A Sikh should not dye his hair. It is a transgression of moral rules of discipline.
- (9) A Sikh should avoid associating himself with the following eight Muslim and Hindu cults: (i) Yogīs of all schools, (ii) Brāhmins, (iii) Tāntrics of all colours (iv) Cynics, (v) Ascetics with matted hair (vi) Muslim recluses: *Pīrs* (vii) Anchorites (viii) Bigoted Muslims.

These cult teachers try to destroy your convictions and deprive you of your genuine faith and belief, and they wilfully try to impose their own false cult beliefs and misleading doctrines.

- (10) A Sikh should not indulge in gambling, theft, cheating and promiscuity of any kind.
- (11) When a member of a Sikh family dies, a Sikh should not perform any Hindu rites of shaving the head in mourning. He should arrange the reading of *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, *Kīrtan* (Singing of Hymns) and *Laṅgar*: distribution of sacramental food.
- (12) A Sikh should not wear the sacred thread of the Brāhmins, or put frontal marks on his head. For a Sikh his hair (Keśās) are sacred thread.
- (13) Out of his savings from the righteous labour a Sikh should give tithes for charitable purpose. A Sikh should consider the mouth of the poor to be treasury of the Gurū. It means that any money spent on the poor and destitute is as good as giving it as offering to the Gurū in the temple.
- (14) A Sikh should not become a Masaṇḍ, a Pīr, or spiritual preceptor in any sense of the word. He should also not acknowledge anyone as his Gurū or Pīr besides the ten Gurūs and the *Gurū Granth*.

- (15) A Sikh should not by himself assume the religious honorific, *Bhāi*, *Mahānt* etc. It is bestowed as an honour by the *San̄gat* not as a title but as an address. It is the vanity and pride of these honorifics, which brought unprecedented disaster and destruction to the Masānds.
- (16) A Temple Officiant (*Dharmśālā*, now known as *Granthī*) should be humble, fearless, truthful, restrained in habits, patient, helpful to others, compassionate, merciful, affectionate, regular in prayers and meditations, forgiving and sensitive to the suffering of human beings. He should be hospitable to travellers coming from distant lands.
- (17) A Sikh should not use cow-dung to plaster a kitchen or hearth. It is a Hindu superstition. As far as possible a Sikh should employ a Sikh as his cook. While preparing and distributing food his hands should be scrupulously clean.
- (18) A Sikh should neither worship nor pay homage to tombs, graves, Qāzīs, Brāhmīns, Mullās, or Samādhīs of Hindu widows (*Satīs*), who burn themselves with their dead husband.
- (19) Every village and city should have a temple-cum-rest-house where wayfarers can spend their nights. The *Gurū Granth Sāhib* should be installed in it.
- (20) A Sikh should teach his children how to read and understand *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. The closing ceremony of the reading of *Gurū Granth* should be performed by reading the *Slokas* of Gurū Tegh Bahādur. (Bhāi Kāhan Singh Nābhā, author of Sikh Encyclopaedia: *Mahān Kosh* interprets this clause by concluding that the *Rāgmālā* should not be read).
- (21) A Sikh should discuss and debate Sikhism and Sikh doctrines with a person who is sincere seeker and who asks questions with good and noble intentions. A Sikh should not talk about Sikhism in the house of irreligious, atheists and confirmed opponents of moral and spiritual values.



- (22) If a Sikh is in difficulty, then in the late hours of the night he should recite *Japujī* five times and contemplate on the feet of the Gurū and ask other devout Sikhs to pray for him.
- (23) A Sikh should not annoy, harass or cause trouble to a devout and saintly Sikh, however poor. Even God and the True Gurū will not forgive him.
- (24) A Sikh should show reverential respect for the Sword, as Gurū Gobind Singh did so. A Sikh should always remain in defence preparedness and keep necessary weapons with him.
- (25) The *Khālsā* is distinct in his faith and character from the Hindus and Muslims. He should not have any faith in any Masānd. He should never run away from the battlefield, but face the enemy and fight unto death for victory.
- (26) If a Sikh commits any moral offence, or breaks any rule of the *Rehitnāmā*, let him stand in the congregation with folded hands or present himself before the *Pañj Piārās* and seek forgiveness and accepts disciplinary punishment for atonement.  
*Author's Note:* This disciplinary action is generally imposed in the form of some service or act of charity. The person punished may be asked to clean the shoes of the congregation for two or three weeks, or he may be asked to wash utensils in the Community Kitchen. These are services which the Sikhs voluntarily do out of devotion. No physical punishment is ever imposed unless the sin is a crime.
- (27) The religious and cultural matters of the Sikhs should be settled within the religious orders of the community. Cases involving religion, social relations and culture should not be taken to secular courts and secular governments.
- (28) To break one's vows, to take a false oath or to cause wilful injury to others by treachery, jealousy or ill - will are serious offences and transgressions of moral laws of Sikhism.
- (29) One who does not accept the greetings or courtesy shown by another Sikh, commits a serious moral offence.

- (30) Dharam' Chañd, father of Chaupā Siñgh, once asked Gurū Gobiñd Siñgh, "Thou O True King, have said, I am in the Khālsā and the Khālsā is my embodiment. Kindly elucidate the meaning."

Spake Gurū Gobiñd Siñgh: "My spiritual Personality, which will live eternally with God, will manifest its divine power in the *Sarbat Khālsā*: Assembly of Disciplined Khālsā; the *Sikh Panth* (Sikh Nation) as a whole, wherever their collective Will is expressed, and not in individuals or small groups."

The Rehitnāmās are not canonized documents. When a Sikh accepts baptism at the Akāl Takhat or any other authentic place, he is given the same oral instruction which Gurū Gobiñd Siñgh gave to the First Five: Pañj Piārās. No baptized Sikh is officially handed over any particular Rehitnāmā in writing. Written Rehitnāmās are of two kinds. One which are based on the historical and traditional Rehit (instructions). They are basically the same but are published under different names. The second type are the cult Rehitnāmās in which the cults like Nāmdhārīs, Nirāñkārīs or other Saints (*Saints*) add to these traditional Rehitnāmās, their own innovations of dress, dietary and other things. These Rehitnāmās may serve the purpose of cult-groups to some extent, but they are ultimately ignored by the Sikh *Sanāts*, and like the cult-groups die a natural death. *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib* gives the essence of Sikh Code of Conduct:

*rehit rehit rehī jāhī bikārā*

*Gur pūre kai sabadi apārā.*

If one lives according to the Gurū's *Rehit*

His evil propensities (*Bikārā*)

Gradually diminish and disappear

*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Arjan, *Rāga Gaurī*, p. 259.

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Bhāi Nañd Lāl, *Tankhānāmā*, 44-55.
2. *Ibid.*, 56-62.

3. (i) Daljit Singh, "Dasam Granth: Its History," *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, July 1994, *The Sikh Review*, August 1994.
- (ii) Jagjit Singh, "Fictional Identity of Dasam Granth," *The Sikh Review*, August 1994, "Dasam Granth: Real Issues," *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, July 1994.
- (iii) Principal Harbhajan Singh, *Dasam Granth Bāre Chonve Lekh*, *The Spokesman*, Chandigarh.
- (iv) *Avatāroād te Dasam Granth*, a pamphlet published by a group of 24 like-minded persons.
- (v) Harinder Singh Mehboob, *Sahije Rachio Khālsā*.
- (vi) Prof. Gurtej Singh, "Two Views on Dasam Granth: An Appreciation of Āshṭās and Jaggīs Approach," *Fundamental Issues in Sikh Studies*.
- (vii) Diwān Singh, His book on *Bachitar Nāṭak*, *Chanḍi Charitar*. It is surprising that these writers maintain that *Dasam Granth* is not the composition of Gurū Gobind Singh, yet most of them have quoted passages from the *Dasam Granth* in their books.

When we are casting doubts on the compositions, being recited to prepare *Amrit Pāhul*: *Khaṇḍe kā Amrit* for baptism of the Sikh novices since the time of Gurū Gobind Singh, we are also casting doubt on the ceremony of Sikh baptism on the eve of Tercentenary Celebrations of birth of *Khālsā* Brotherhood.

4. *Ādi Gurū Granth*, *Rāga Gaurī*, p. 259.

## CHAPTER 11

### CODE OF CONDUCT: REHITNĀMĀ FOR SAHAJDHĀRĪ (UNBAPTIZED) SIKHS

Every highly organized religion has an inner circle of initiated or baptized disciples, who take vows of living strictly according to the moral and spiritual instructions of the apostles and prophets. Great and illumined prophets can perpetuate their experiences, ideals and philosophy of life by moulding and transforming sincere seekers of higher religious experience in the image of their own personality. They make laws and precepts for their followers, which symbolize their inner and outer life. At the time of initiation the disciples take a vow to accept the moral laws, which characterize the inner and external life of their prophets. Within the limits of their understanding they make an effort to be faithful in theory and practice the precepts, they voluntarily and eagerly accept.

But even in higher and universal religions there are quite a large number of unbaptized and lay-followers. Those lay-followers and devotees are never required to give exclusive allegiance to the faith, till they decide to take vows of faith. Even though they formally stick to the religion of their birth, they willingly and openly accept the moral and spiritual influences and basic universal teachings of great saints and Apostles from other faiths. They are first considered the lay-followers and novice in the faith, and then they may either become initiated disciples, or they may bring up their children in the new faith. The Sikh Gurūs and the Šūfī Saints, the Buddhist and Vaiṣṇav Saints had quite a large number of such lay-followers and devotees, who did not acquire

the same respect which their disciples did, but they were equally respected, and at times, by their devoted service to the Sikh community, acquired a stature and respect, which only a handful of initiated disciples achieved. They became part of Sikh history and are still venerated as outstanding Sikhs of the Gurūs.

From the *Janam Sākhīs* (hagiographical accounts) of Gurū Nānak, we learn that such devotees were known as *Nāmdharik* Sikhs of Gurū Nānak. During the lifetime of Gurū Gobīnd Singh, and quite obviously a little earlier, they came to be known as *Sahajdhārī* Sikhs. The word *Nāmdharik* means Nominal Sikhs, and the word *Sahajdhārī* means those who slowly move and steadily adopt Sikhism, and are to be treated as novices in the faith. A *Sahajdhārī*, therefore is one who has entered the House of Gurū Nānak-Gurū Gobīnd Singh, and would not only continue to be on probation, but he shall identify himself with the moral and spiritual culture and basic beliefs of this House. He shall have the greatest respect for even those ideals and moral laws which he feels he cannot practice. He would be respected as a Sikh, enjoying complete equality with baptized Sikhs in every field, but he cannot participate, perform or conduct those ceremonies or rites which can be performed only by the baptized Sikh. This is so because certain ceremonies can be performed only by those who have made total commitments to the Faith, and have not only become baptized Sikhs but live according to the moral and spiritual laws of *Khālsā* discipline. The *Sahajdhārīs* combined strong leanings towards Sikhism with either exclusive or limited partiality for the religion of their birth. In the biographical accounts of the Gurūs we read of Hindus, Buddhists and Jain monks, who on meeting the Gurū accepted the doctrines and mystical practices of Sikhism, yet they sought the Gurū's permission to be permitted to live in the robes of their religious orders. They did not have the courage to discard their externals and the social customs of the society in which they lived. This became sometime difficult because of other members of their family. If a person adopts a new religion out of

faith and understanding, it is not possible for his wife, parents and even children to appreciate this inner change in him.

Sahajdhārī Sikhs have served the cause of Sikhism throughout Sikh history. Some of them joined the *Udāsī* and *Sewā Panthī* Missions, and their names and contribution to Sikh history are still remembered with great respect. Most of the Hindu Sahajdhārīs came from either Siindhī community or the *Sanātan Dharma* community of Puñjāb. The *Āryā Samāj* movement unfortunately has done the greatest damage to Hindu-Sikh relations, which were cemented into an unbreakable bond by Sanātan Dharma Hindus and the Sahajdhārīs, but during the last few years their opposition to the Sikhs in the religious and political field is becoming milder and less unreasonable. The negative attitude of the *Āryā Samājists* has produced similar reactionary fanatics in *Akālī Dal* at the political level. The two communities, which have had the healthiest relations throughout history, became each other's opponents in States where *Āryā Samāj* thinking dominated, notably in Delhi, Haryāṇā and Puñjāb. In other States like Bengāl, Āndhrā, Tāmīl Nāḍū, where Sanātan Dharma Hinduism is in its pristine purity dominates, they have the most intimate and friendly relations with the Sikh community at religious and cultural levels.

Those who accepted the *Charan Pāhul Amrit* from Gurū Nānak and his successors, received the initiation (*Gurū-dīkshā*) into the mystic knowledge of the faith. They came to be known as *Gursikhs*, or *Sanmukh Sikhs* or *Gurmukhs*.

*Gur dikhā lai soi Sikhū sadāiā.*

*Gur Sikh iko hoi jo Gur bhāiā.*

Only on receiving Ordination (*dīkshā*) from the Gurū,

Can a disciple call himself a *Gursikh*.

Bhāi Gurdās, Vār. 3, Pauṛī. 11.

Throughout the *Ādi Gurū Granth* and the writings of Bhāi Gurdās, it has been made quite clear that those who have been

initiated into the Sikh discipline and the Divine Name are accepted as the blessed disciples. It must be clearly understood that every Hindu or Muslim who pays a formal respect to the Sikh Gurūs, or merely pays a political homage to Sikhism is not a Sahajdhārī. He cannot claim the same position in the Sikh community which is given authentically by the Gurūs to the Sahajdhārīs. Anyone who misinterprets and distorts Sikh ideals, or anyone who is politically, socially and culturally opposed to the general interests of the Sikh community, can not be a Sahajdhārī by merely paying lip service to Sikhs. There are some militant societies like R.S.S. who call the Sikhs, Hindus when it suits them politically, but they have not won the goodwill, the sympathy and support of even fifty Sikhs in the last fifty years. They have never shown any respect to the Sikh Scriptures, Sikh Shrines, nor even given any co-operation to the Sikhs on any such issues like the language, literature and other cultural problems. On the other hand, their subtle and vulgar attempts to present Sikhism as a colourless sect of Hinduism has provoked fanatical and dangerous reactions amongst the Sikhs throughout India and abroad.

Only those Hindus or Muslims who accepts the basic tenets of Sikhism and live like novice, treading the path of Sikhism and respecting their parent religions as a sister faith are true Sahajdhārī Sikhs. Such Sahajdhārī Sikhs are very proud of having entered the House of Gurū Nānak-Gurū Gobind Singh. The Sahajdhārī Sikhs are proud of their devotion and zeal, and they have stood by the Sikhs during the most difficult periods of their history. They derive their major spiritual inspiration from the *Ādi Gurū Granth*, and perform most of their household ceremonies according to Sikh rites. In Sikh history there have not only been Sahajdhārī Sikhs but also Sahajdhārī Saints, whose devotion, dedication and spiritual achievements have been great and profound. They have always been greatly respected and they shall always be respected. There have been Hindu Sahajdhārīs and Muslim Sahajdhārīs. Upto 1947, out of fifteen *Kīrtan Jathās*

(hymns-singing groups) employed in the Harimaṇḍir (Golden Temple), seven were Muslim Sahajdhārīs, who were gifted musicians and singers and had better knowledge of *Gurbāṇī* than the ordinary *Khālsā* Sikhs.

### GURŪ GOBIṆD SINGH'S CODE OF CONDUCT (REHITNĀMĀ) FOR SAHAJDHĀRĪ SIKHS

The Sahajdhārī Sikhs have followed a positive Code of Conduct. Recently, I chanced to see two Manuscripts of Bhāi Manī Singh's *Sikhān dī Bhagatmālā* which has an authentic *Rehitnāmā* of Gurū Gobiṇd Singh for Sahajdhārīs, named *Wājabu'l-Arṣ*: Proper and Authentic Answers to Questions of Sahajdhārīs by Gurū Gobiṇd Singh; Bhāi Manī Singh's *Sikhān dī Bhagatmālā* (Central Library, Patialā, MS No. 2827 and Sikh Reference Library Amritsar, MS No. 7398)<sup>1</sup>. Bhāi Vīr Singh edited and printed a version of it, which is not only incomplete but also not very correct. Bhāi Vīr Singh excluded all the *Sākhīs* of seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth Gurūs. Earlier than this printed edition, Gulāb Singh and Sons printed a complete version in which only one or two *Sākhīs* are missing. It appears that Bhāi Manī Singh was an eye-witness to this incident, and he also had the original copy of the document or its first-hand copy. He repeatedly refers to the fact that Gurū Gobiṇd Singh signed every clause of the *Rehitnāmā*, and he was presenting to the reader a copy of the original.

A group of Sahajdhārīs placed ten questions before Gurū Gobiṇd Singh. He answers them, and the answers are recorded and signed by the Gurū in the manner in which he signed his letters. In the Manuscript, the words: *dastkhat khās hoe* (the Gurū specifically signed) are found after all main clauses of the *Rehitnāmā*. It is clear from this document entitled *Wājabu'l-Arṣ* that after the creation of the *Khālsā* Holy Order the Sahajdhārī Sikhs were given a new orientation. Earlier the Sahajdhārī were guided by individual Masaṇds, and more often than not the



Masaṁds misguided them, and they claimed full authority of the Gurū, which they did not have. After receiving money, they compromised on all issues. It was easier for them to exploit Sahajdhārī Sikhs than the orthodox Sikhs who took guidance directly from the Gurū. After the creation of the Khālsā Holy Order, the responsibility of the Masaṁds was given to chosen Five Ordained Khālsā (*Pañj Piārās*) and to the general Will of the Khālsā Saṅgat (congregation of the elect). The Khālsā Saṅgat was not clear about the *Sahajdhārī Rehit*, and different people gave different opinions. Now they put vital questions covering all the major points of their Code of Conduct and received authentic answers.

TRANSLATION OF SAHAJDHĀRĪ REHITNĀMĀ  
TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR SAHAJDHĀRĪS  
WĀJABU'L-ARZ

Once the Sahajdhārī Sikhs presented ten questions to Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh. The Gurū answered all the questions, and had them authentically recorded. This document came to be known as *Wājabu'l-Arz*: Proper and Authentic Answers to Questions of Sahajdhārīs. This document was signed by Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh, and this is a correct copy of the same document. These Commandments should be considered *Rehit-Vivek* (Moral Code) essential for Sahajdhārī Sikhs. These ten Commandments were enunciated by the tenth Gurū (*Mahallā Das*), each Rule was recorded and then signed by the Master. These ten Commandments removed the prevailing confusion about the Sahajdhārī Rehit.

(1) *First Question of Sahajdhārī Sikhs*: Master, we Sahajdhārīs arrange marriages by inviting the Brāhmiṁs to perform *Vedic* rites. Now the Sikhs say that we should perform the marriage by *Anaṁd* marriage rites, enunciated by the Sikh Gurūs and we should not invite the Brāhmiṁs. What is your command, Master?

*Gurū Gobind Singh Answered and Signed the Statement:* First, perform the marriage according to Anand marriage rites, and then you can perform your traditional Vedic rites, if you wish.

(2) *Second Question of Sahajdhārī Sikhs:* What are to be our relations with five repudiated religious groups: (i) *Mīnās*: Followers of Prithī Mal, (ii) *Dhīrmalās*: Followers of Dhīrmal, Elder brother of Gurū Hari Rāi, (iii) *Rām Rāiyās*: Followers of Rām Rāi, elder brother of Gurū Hari Krishan, (iv) Followers of Masaṇds, corrupt and rejected priests of the Old Order, (v) *Sirgum*: (wrongly translated clean-shaven). It means Jains who are mostly atheists and pull their hair one by one, till they become bald.

*Gurū Gobind Singh Answered:* Do not have any inter-marriage or socio-cultural relations with the followers of these five religious groups.

*Further Supplementary Question:* Master who are the sirgum?

*Gurū Gobind Singh Answered:* The *Sarevare* Jains, who are atheists: *Anāsarvādī*.

*Further Supplementary Question:* Master some of us are traders and businessmen. Some of us are government servants. Our professional duties bring us into contact with everyone. Sometimes we cannot avoid them because we cannot know a person's belief from a person's face or dress.

*Gurū Gobind Singh Answered:* You can always question a person about his cult and creed. Formal trade relations or market place encounters apart, you should avoid inter-cultural mixture with these people. If professional duties compel you to have any such relations with them, make amends for transgression of this rule by offering Prayer (*Ardāsa*) seeking forgiveness.

(3) *Third Question of Sahajdhārī Sikhs:* Then the Sahajdhārī Sikhs asked the third question. O True King, we Sahajdhārīs are your Sikhs. When our father or mother dies, we perform the mourning ceremony of shaving our heads *Bhadra-karan*, (Punjabī: *Bhadan*). Now the *Khālsā* Sikhs say the *Khālsā* has been created according

to the Command and Will of God. We should not perform the Hindu mourning ceremony of *Bhadra-karan* (shaving the head). O True King, we shall do what you command us to do.

*Gurū Gobind Singh Answered:* Sahajdhārī Sikhs should not perform the Hindu mourning ceremony of shaving their heads. They should perform the Sikh rites of reading the Holy Book, offering prayers for the departed soul and food in the community kitchen, but if the custom of the land in which you live compel you to perform other rites, you can do so after the Sikh rites have been performed.

(4) *Fourth Question of Sahajdhārī Sikhs:* True Lord, on the occasion of marriages in the family we generally invited the Brāhmins and offered them food. Now the Khālsā Sikhs say food should not be offered to the Brāhmins but to the Sikhs. True King, we shall accept your command.

*Gurū Gobind Singh Answered and Signed the Statement:* The Gurū's Community Kitchen (*langar*) is open to all. You should offer food to Sikhs and also to non-Sikhs, such as Brāhmins, other castes and creed people, way-farers and pilgrims coming to holy places. To everyone offer food with respect and devotion.

(5) *Fifth Question of Sahajdhārī Sikhs:* Master, when a bridegroom leaves with a marriage party for the marriage ceremony, we shave him with razor to perform the ceremony. What should we do now?

*Gurū Gobind Singh Answered:* The clean-shaven Sahajdhārīs may use scissors for any such traditional ceremony, they wish to perform, but they should not use a razor. But the Keśādhārī Sahajdhārīs should give *Amrit Pāhul* (Khālsā baptism) to their sons before their marriage ceremony is performed.

(6) *Sixth Question of Sahajdhārī Sikhs:* True King! We Sahajdhārī Sikhs generally take the bones and ashes of our dead to the Ganges. Now some Khālsā Sikhs say that we should not do so. What is your command on this issue Lord?

*Gurū Gobind Singh Answered:* If you can afford to reach the Ganges

you can do so. We are not particular about it. Many of my brave and saintly Sikhs die in the battlefield. They are generally cremated there. For them the battlefield is as holy as the Kurukshetra. The suburbs of a holy place like Amritsar, which is visited by saintly pilgrims, is equally good, where the remains of the dead are sanctified by the dust of holymen. The prayers of the pilgrims will bless the dead. The remains of the dead are placed at the feet of the *Sādh Saṅgat*: congregation of saintly persons.

(7) *Seventh Question of Sahajdhārī Sikhs*: We Sahajdhārī Sikhs, True Lord, trim our beards according to Mughal style when some of us have to attend Mughal courts, or attend to clerical duties in Mughal service. What shall we do now?

*Gurū Gobind Singh Answered*: You, who are Sahajdhārī Sikhs should now keep a full beard, just as the *Khālsā* Sikhs keep, but if there is official compulsion, you may comply with the orders of your rulers. But when you go to the *Sādh Saṅgat* (Congregation of the Sikh Temple) and wish to participate in their activities, offer *Ardāsa* (Invocational Prayer) seeking forgiveness for this transgression.

(8) *Eighth Question of Sahajdhārī Sikhs*: True Lord, there are some Sahajdhārī Sikhs who go on pilgrimage to Ganges, how should we deal with them when they come back?

*Gurū Gobind Singh Answered*: Deal with them with compassion, understanding and love. Do not cause any embarrassment to them.

(9) *Ninth Question of Sahajdhārī Sikhs*: Master, you have commanded us not to have any social and cultural relations with five disowned and rejected religious groups viz: followers of Prithīmal (*Mīmās*), Dhīrmal, Rām Rāi, Masaṇds and Atheists (Jains who do not believe in God). Are we to avoid even casual meetings with them?

*Gurū Gobind Singh Answered*: My blessed Sikhs, my command on this issue is that you should completely avoid the followers of these groups. If there is any disturbing supporter of these groups in your

assembly, remove him from the assembly. The reason is that instead of joining the assembly in prayer and meditation they would talk and argue in such a way that they would destroy the faith and convictions of innocent people. They cause doubt, confusion and mischievously disturb the faith of innocent people. They talk and debate in such way, on the basis of false doctrines, false history in support of impostor gurūs and saints, that many innocent people and sincere devotees are misled and hurt. The more they spread their false teachings, the more harm they do to those who happen to take them seriously. But if out of these followers of impostor Gurūs and atheistic cults anyone repents and turns towards truth and the right path and expresses his willingness to follow Sikh ideals sincerely, he should be forgiven and accepted in the Brotherhood of Sikhs. The door should be kept open for the truly repentant. Enlighten such a one with the true doctrines of the Gurūs. He must earn his own living by his own labours and never beg like mendicants, and lead a life of devotion. Your own heart should be pure and your faith should be strong. Casual meetings with them will not matter much.

(10) *Tenth Question of the Sahajdhārī Sikhs*: When any member of our family died, we invited the Brāhmin priests to read *Garaḥ Purāṇa* and the *Gāyatrī mantra* and perform other Hindu rites. Now the Brāhmin priests refuse to come to our funeral services and perform these ceremonies. They insist that we should live like orthodox Hindus, wear sacred thread and observe all rites, which the Hindu Scriptures demand from their devotees. What is your command on this issue O King of kings? We shall obey it and in future carry out your instructions.

*Gurū Gobind Singh Answered*: Be strong in your faith and conviction of Sikhs ideals. Give up all Brāhmanical rites and perform the Sikh rites of reading the whole of *Granth Sāhib*. After the reading ceremony is over, listen to the Interpretation (*Kathā*) of Gurū Arjan Dev's *Sahaskritī Ślokas* (67 verses in Prākṛitized Sanskrit) by a learned Sikh, who understands and can explain them.

Read also the first *Sohilā* of *Mārū Rāga*. Prepare *Kaṛāh Praśād* and distribute it in the name of the dead after Invocational Prayer. The departed soul will be born as a *Khālsā* Sikh in his next birth and lead a saintly life for his ultimate redemption. You, the kith and kin, will also be blessed with peace, knowledge and enlightenment. There is nothing more precious in life than the Name of God, and sincere Faith and devotion of God. Contemplate the Name of God and share your surplus food and earnings with the needy. These are the Ten Commandments for the Sahajdhāris.

"GURŪ GOBĪND SĪNGH, KING OF KINGS SIGNED AND AUTHENTICATED THE DOCUMENT. THIS IS A COPY OF THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENT."

#### AUTHOR'S COMMENTS

This Sahajdhārī Rehitnāmā is remarkable for many significant features. For want of proper research work in this field, the documents remained unnoticed, unpublished. Some cheap market booksellers of Bazar Māi Sewān Amritsar published some incomplete Rehitnāmās. None of these was either complete or properly edited. The first such version was published by Partāp Sīngh Sunder Sīngh, Bazar Māi Sewān, Amritsar. The second better version with a fairly good Introduction was published by Sañt Sampūran Sīngh, *Nirmalā* Saint and brother of Bhāi Mohan Sīngh Vaid. Bhāi Kāhan Sīngh Nābhā published some extracts from Rehitnāmās in his *Gurmat Sudhākar* and subsequently in *Gurmat Mārtand* published in 1962, twenty-four years after his death. The Rehitnāmās prepared by religious cults and groups in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries introduced some of their own erratic practices, which have cult ideas, not sanctioned by the Sikh Gurūs. A typical example is the *Nāmdhārī Rehitnāmā* found printed in *Nāmadhārī Nitnem* (Prayer Book) alleged to be written by Bābā Rām Sīngh. The *Amrit-Pāhul* ceremony is described much more correctly than we find it in S.G.P.C. *Rehit Maryādā*. It is also remarkable, for it is the only Prayer Book having such important

prayer as *Akāl Ustatī* of Gurū Gobīnd Singh. But there are two Nāmdhārī practices, highlighted in this Prayer Book, one of which is an innovation for which they are not responsible, while the other is a grave error for which the Miṇās, Dhīrmal and Rām Rāi were excommunicated. Marriages are performed not around the *Ādi Gurū Granth*, but around *havan* (sacrificial fires). Bābā Rām Singh was misguided by *Prem Sumārag*;<sup>2</sup> a late eighteenth century work, published by S.G.P.C., Amritsar. Bābā Rām Singh repeatedly suggests in his letters to accept *Prem Sumārag* as the best guide on *Khālsā Rehit*. The use of *havan* as altar instead of *Ādi Gurū Granth* was possibly a make shift arrangement in the eighteenth century, when only copies of the *Ādi Gurū Granth* were those written by hand only, and these did not exceed a few hundred, which were found only in some well-established Sikh Shrines. So the *havan* was not Bābā Rām Singh's innovation.

The other sacrilegious innovation introduced by the followers of Bābā Rām Singh, long after his death, is that he was declared the twelfth Gurū of the Sikhs. Historical fiction which no sensible man can believe, except of course their pious uncritical followers, has been created by some of our own contemporaries to construct this false pontificate. They have made the same mistake, which Prithīmal Miṇa, Dhīrmal and Rām Rāi made during the lifetime of the Gurūs, and the followers of Baṇḍā or rather the impostor Baṇḍā, who pretended to have survived the torture inflicted on Baṇḍā of history, and ten other people who pretended to be *avatārs* of Gurū Gobīnd Singh, did after the death of Gurū Gobīnd Singh. Most of these cults were excommunicated or disowned by the Sikhs, and have either disappeared or survived as dead wood of a spiritless cult. Unless the Nāmdhārīs do some serious thinking about these innovations, they are likely to meet the same fate in the next two decades.

The Akālī leaders have abandoned all religious and spiritual values for the sake of dirty politics. Their religious activities are confined to misappropriation of Gurdwārā funds by capturing

management control over Sikh temples. Their politics is confined to sentimental populism in the name of Sikh *Pañth*, and passing innocuous and platitudinous resolutions threatening the government. In their deep involvement with the Communist politics, most of them have not only denigrated Sikh values and ideals, but have completely alienated the Sahajdhārīs, the Udāsīs, the Nirmalās, the Nihāngs and even religious groups and living saints who are respected by the Sikh community. No living Sikh Saint, no enlightened religious group, no theologian and Sikh scholar worth the name, except those who have been acting as their mercenary scribes and *Munśīs* in the hope of getting party ticket or some position in party executive, has never shown any willingness to work with them. They have disparaged and belittled the contribution of the Sahajdhārīs, and that is perhaps the only way they can show themselves to be superior to all prominent religious institutions and groups. I will now give a few examples of the tremendous and lasting contributions of the Sahajdhārī Sikhs.

(1) Bhāi Des Rāj was one of the richest man in Amritsar. When Ahmad Shāh Abdālī desecrated the Holy Shrine of Amritsar on the eve of Baisākhī festival, April 10, 1762, and completely destroyed the Holy Temple of Amritsar, now known as the Golden Temple, the *Khālāsā Mīsal* armies avenged the insult by giving a crushing defeat to the Afghān invader the same year in October. Bhāi Des Rāj sold all his property and donated all his wealth and jewellery for rebuilding the Holy Shrine. A very large amount was donated by the twelve Mīsal Sardārs. He kept for himself and his wife, a small house and a little amount just sufficient for their bare survival in religious poverty. He worked as a humble labourer throughout the construction work. His devotion and dedication was so great that he is respected as a great saint of Sikh history. Like Bhāi Des Rāj, the Sahajdhārī Sikhs have made significant contribution for Sikh causes and ideals throughout history.

(2) Many Sahajdhārī devotees joined the Udāsī missionary



movement and made enormous contribution by carrying the message of Sikhs to the remotest regions of India, and there were others who joined the *Sewāpañthī* movement and are respected as outstanding saints of their times. The well-known names of the last two centuries are: Bhāi Sewā Rām and Bhāi Sahaj Rām who organized the *Sewāpañthī* movement, Bhāi Aḍḍan Shāh, whose associates came to be known as Aḍḍan Shāhī Sikhs. (See Chapter 20). Other religious luminaries were: Bhāi Ayā Rām, Bhāi Richī Rām, Bhāi Dharm Dās, Bhāi Durbārī, Bhāi Shāh Jīwān, Bhāi Dayā Rām, Bhāi Rām Dayāl, Bhāi Pārās Rām, Bhāi Bhallā Rām, Bhāi Vastī Rām, Bhāi Tehal Dās, Bhāi Rām Krishan. Bhāi Vir Singh has written short biographies of some of these saints in his *Saint Gāthā*. There are now available some unpublished documents of the inspiring lives of these saints.

(3) During the early period of Gurdwārā Movement the Sahajdhārī Sikhs and even the Sanātan Dharma Hindus stood by the Sikhs in their fight against corrupt *Mahants*. Only the Āryā Samāj leaders like Lālā Lājpat Rāi supported the corrupt Mahants of Nankāṇā Sāhib and other places, even after the gruesome Nankāṇā tragedy.

During the Akālī movement the Sikh *Jathās* carried the *Ādi Gurū Granth* in a costly *Pālki* (palanquin carried by four persons). All the *Pālki*s required for the *Jathās* of Jaito *Morchā* were provided by a Sahajdhārī Sikh of Amritsar. Quite a large number of Sahajdhārī Sikhs not only provided moral support, but helped in Laṅgar and other organizational requirements of such a revolutionary movement. They completely identified themselves with the religious and political cause of the Sikh Pañth. It is a matter of shame and regret that the Akālī party in its second half of leadership and organization have never taken the Sahajdhārī Sikhs into confidence. By Sahajdhārī Sikhs, the author does not mean Hindus, who merely pay lip service to Sikh Gurūs, and are guided by intensely communal R.S.S. ideology of Hindu *Rāṣṭra* and Hindī Imperialism, but genuine Sahajdhārī Sikhs who are

sincerely dedicated to Sikhism. Ninety percent of the Sindhī Community are very devout and dedicated Sahajdhārī Sikhs. The Sanātan Dharma families of Amritsar have many devoted Sahajdhārī Sikhs. My friend Dr Hirā Lāl Choprā, former Professor of Islāmīc History and Culture, Calcuttā University, who has individually done much more for Sikhism in Calcuttā than any other Sikh religious, political and cultural organization, has once or twice organized Sahajdhārī Conferences, but the Sikh leaders have never even formally invited the Sahajdhārī leaders to their conferences. The response of the Sikh leaders to the problems of Sahajdhārī Sikhs has been very poor. They have simply been ignored.

#### SALIENT FEATURES OF WĀJABU'L-ARZ

The following are the salient features of Sahajdhārī Rehitnāmā (*Wājabu'l-Arz*), which ought to be a guide line for Sahajdhārīs of all times to come.

(1) These ten Commandments of Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh for Sahajdhārī Sikhs show how liberal and understanding was Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh of the problems of novices, ready to accept the full faith of the *Khālsā*, he had created. Lord Buddha and his successors also had this problem, and they solved it by having simpler and less orthodox rules for the lay Buddhist than they had for the *Bhikkhūs* (Monks). Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh made it clear that the Sahajdhārī Sikhs (lay Unbaptized Sikhs) who seek inspiration and enlightenment from the Sikh Scriptures, Sikh history and Sikh saints, are inseparable part of the Sikh community. When I went to Dāccā in 1959 (then East Pakistan), I was surprised to find innumerable Muslim devotees of Gurū Nānak. There still are countless Muslim devotees of Gurū Nānak. Before the partition of India, Muslim Bards who inherited musical talent, regularly performed *Kīrtan* (Hymn singing) in the Harimaṇḍir (Golden Temple) and other Sikh Shrines. As most of them were expert in playing music on the *Rabāb* (a musical instrument dear to Gurū

Nānak) they were generally known as *Rabābīs*. They were considered and respected as Sahajdhārī Sikhs.

(2) It is quite possible that many Sahajdhārīs may drift towards the religion in which they were born, just as the Muslim Rabābīs have become after being completely cut off from the Sikh community, when they migrated to Pakistan. This is no reason for giving them the opportunities and the respect, which Gurū Gobīnd Singh demanded that the Khālsā Sikhs should always give them.

Many baptized Sikhs born in Sikhs families have become atheists and apostates after joining Communist party and their commitment to dialectic materialism. The Communist party of Puñjāb is full of such Sikhs. Many of these Communists put on hair and beard, and even put on *kirpān* and regularly visit Sikh temples to catch Sikh votes. Ever since a section of Akālī *Jathedārs* have become corrupt and irreligious, they identify themselves more with the Communists than with any religious man in private and public life. So in a liberal religion like Sikhism where a person becomes and remains a Sikh by choice, both the Sahajdhārīs and the baptized may drift away from their faith. Both the Sahajdhārīs and the Keśādhārīs are to be judged by their character, deeds and faith in moral and spiritual ideals and not by their pious externals and names.

(3) Whether a person is born in a Sikh family or he comes from other faiths and adopts Sikhism, he has to undergo the discipline of a novice to become acceptable for baptism of the Khālsā Holy Order. Many people hastily accept baptism and consider it just a formal rite to become Khālsā in externals. As they are not properly disciplined for inner life, they are not fully conscious of their religious and spiritual responsibilities, and their moral and spiritual perception are so weak that they relapse into sinful and evil life even though outwardly they may be appearing like Sikhs. Like a number of such baptized Sikhs some Sahajdhārī Sikhs also may be insincere, irresolute and vacillating. They may, in the long

run, relapse into atheism, agnosticism or heterodox Hindu practices. They do not harm Sikhs; they harm themselves if they drift away from moral and spiritual life. The doors of Sikhism are always kept open to those, who for one reason or the other turn away from Sikhism. After all Sahajdhārīs are only novices, and at the earliest stages are probationer Sikhs of Gurū Nānak.

(4) Except in one or two solitary cases in U.S.A. and Canada, I have not seen Sahajdhārī Sikhs aspiring to be overall leaders of the Sikh Community in any State in India or any other country. As I have said earlier, they are entitled to play helpful role in the Executive, but they cannot be Executive Heads of Religious Institutions of the Sikhs. In U.S.A., Canada and U.K. even clean-shaven apostates from Sikhism think that leadership of Sikh religious organizations is a secular managerial post and they can claim it by virtue of being rich, socially well placed Sikhs by birth. They work on the theory that the last thing required for a acquiring control over Sikh temples and Institutions is "Sikh Religious Character", and their only argument in favour of their posture is that this commodity—"Sikh Religious Character"—is rare even in Keśādhārī Sikhs, whom they now choose to call turbaned Sikhs, not knowing that the clean-shaven Sikhs cannot become religious men or authentic Sikhs by merely wearing turbans. A turban is one of the externals, which all the Sahajdhārīs wore before 1947, and even today all Hindus in Puñjāb at the ceremonies of marriage and death.

The manner in which clean-shaven Sikhs assert their leadership in U.S.A., U.K. and Canada is simple and pernicious. Three or four ambitious and greedy people get together, form a religious or charitable trust, buy a house or a Christian church building for sale and register in a pious and holy name, which is supposed to operate in the legal framework of the laws of the country. Some of these societies have been registered purely in the name of clean-shaven Sikhs, and there are such societies run as Sikh temples which are legally the exclusive property of one

family, because the trustees in whose name they are registered are husband, wife and a few reliable kith and kin. Thus quite a few ambitious and selfish people run Sikh temples like medieval Masānds and Mahānts. The temple becomes a place of worship and prayer for the devout and religious people, but the funds are more often misused by impious people, who are Sikhs in name and sometime in form, but do not live even for a day the life, they preach in the Sikh temples. They consider themselves beyond good and evil. Unless such people repent and retrace their steps from acts of apostasy and unless these new Mahānts and Masānds in the western world of Sikhism operating as clean-shaven Sikhs or Keśādhārī Yogīs or socially important figures retrace their steps, they should be given no place in the religious organizational set up of the Sikh Saṅgats and Sikh Churches. The Sikh temples are intended for prayer, worship, meditations, religious education and training, and they should be controlled by persons who know what prayer and worship is, and what their responsibility as religious and cultural leaders is to the generations to come.

(5) The Sahajdhārī Sikhs at times have their own organizations, and they build Sikh temples open to all and run strictly on the rules laid down by Gurū Gobīnd Singh. The *Siṁdhī Saṅgat* Gurdwārās, or Ravīdās Devotees Gurdwārās are a typical example. The atmosphere is orderly, peaceful and purely religious. But ever since Sikh Gurdwārās have become arenas of faction fights and irresponsible political activities, Siṁdhīs and Sahajdhārīs have justifiably delinked themselves from those Sikh Institutions which have become arenas of faction fights and Machiavellian politics.

(6) In the past two centuries the Sahajdhārī Sikhs have been given financial, organizational and missionary responsibilities. But they have never been elected to such executive posts as Presidents or Secretaries in Sikh Organizations, whose purpose is to preach authentic Sikhism. They have been given a place in the executive committees, but have not been given the highly

responsible positions. The reason obviously is that the Executive Heads of such institutions must be Sikhs, whose commitments to Sikhism are complete and who represent those ideals in their words and deeds. Even when Keśādhārī Sikhs, no matter how piously they are dressed, flout the basic Commandments of Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh, the Sikh Saṅgat (Congregation) has the right to throw these people out of the organization and even punish them for transgressions, committed by them while occupying responsible positions.

Sikhism is a religion which throughout its history has condemned forcible conversion from one religion to another. Seekers of truth may leave one religion and adopt another religion out of free choice, but forcible conversion is considered a crime. So Sikhism allows the novices (Sahajdhārīs) to be essential part of Sikh Church and society.

### KHĀLSĀ WITHOUT THE SURNAME "SINGH" IN HISTORY

Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh was installed the tenth Gurū in 1675 A.D. He created the Khālsā Holy Order in 1699, twenty-four years after ascending the Pontific throne and just eight years before his ascension. It is absurd to imagine as most of the people, ignorant of the religious history of the period, aver that there were no ceremony of initiating people to Sikhism and there were no hard and fast rules for the Sikh way of living earlier than the date. The second misconception is that before the Khālsā was organized, Sikhs were just Hindus and were considered a sect of Hinduism, and by large they were like the Hindus of those days, timid escapists, and did not know how to handle a sword. They think that there were no hard and fast rules for the Sikh way of living.

Such thinkers conveniently forget that Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh's Sikhs had fought nearly fifteen battles before the Khālsā was ordained in 1699 A.D. Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh and his army commanded by his brave cousin Saṅgo Shāh fought the battle of

Bhaṅgānī on September 18, 1688, eleven years before the Khālsā Holy Order came into existence. During this period Gurū Gobīnd Singh's own name was Gobīnd Dās, and he loved to be addressed as Gobīnd Rāi: King Gobīnd. We have already explained in Chapter 5 of this book that upto the year 1699, all the Gurūs from Gurū Nānak to Gurū Gobīnd Singh baptized Sikh with *Charan Pāhul Amrit* ceremony. It was conducted by the Gurū personally, and now that Gurū Gobīnd Singh had decided that there should be no individual Gurū, he introduced the new baptism of the double-edged sword (*Khaṇḍe-dī-Pāhul*) by the Five Elect (Pañj Piārās). Out of humility and to exalt the status of the new baptism, he himself formally took baptismal water from the Five Elect, created by him, and also changed his name. No other Sikh who had already accepted the earlier baptism changed his name. It is quite possible that some might have added the suffix "Singh", but quite a large number of Sikhs did not. Mātā Sāhib Devī and Mātā Suṇdarī did not add the suffix "Kaur" to their name, as it is quite clear from their letters quoted below. All the Sikhs without the suffix "Singh" are addressed as Khālsā. Those who were baptized by refractory Masaṇds or by the descendants of Prithimal, Dhīrmal, Rām Rāi, were disowned and were called *Sahlangī* Sikhs (Falsely Co-related Sikhs). The word "Singh" was generally used as suffix by Rājput princes, and the word "Kaur" was commonly used as suffix to the names of Rājput princesses. After the Khālsā Holy Order was created, it became compulsory to address the male initiates "Singh", the female initiates "Kaur". The following letters (*Hukamnāmās*: Edicts) of Gurū Gobīnd Singh, Mātā Suṇdarī, Mātā Sāhib Devī, all addressed to prominent Sikh missionaries after the Khālsā Holy Order was instituted in 1699 A.D., prove this point to the hilt. In spite of this irrefutable evidence, some writers in their writings are distorting the names of historical personalities like Māi Bhāg Kaur (Māi Bhāgo), Mātā Suṇdar Kaur (Mātā Suṇdarī), Mātā Sāhib Kaur (Mātā Sāhib Devī), Bhāi Naṇḍ Lāl Singh (Bhāi Naṇḍ Lāl) and now even Gurū Nānak, Singh, although no

੨੬ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ

ਸਿਰੀਗੁਰੂਕੀਦੀਆਗਿਆਤਾਦੀਮਿਹਰੰਦੁਪਰਮੰਦੁਰਮੰਦੁਗੁਰੂਕੇ

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ਗੁਪਆਰਾਧੀਦੀਫਰਮਾਇਸਿਤੁਕਮੁਦੇਖਦੇਤੀਸਿਤਾਬੀਤੰਰੀਕਰਾਇਤੋਈ

ਅਉਤੇਕੁਨੇਕੁਗੁਰੂਕੇਨਦਤਿਕਾਹੈਏਸੋਅਪੇਲੇਅਣਾਧੀਆਰਬੀਨਿਕੇਰਗ

ਨਿਅਦਗੁਸੇਨਿਅਲੁਤੇਗੁਰੂਸਦੀਅਥਿਕਾਇਪਦਗੁਰੂਕਾਨਿਗੁਰੂਕੇ

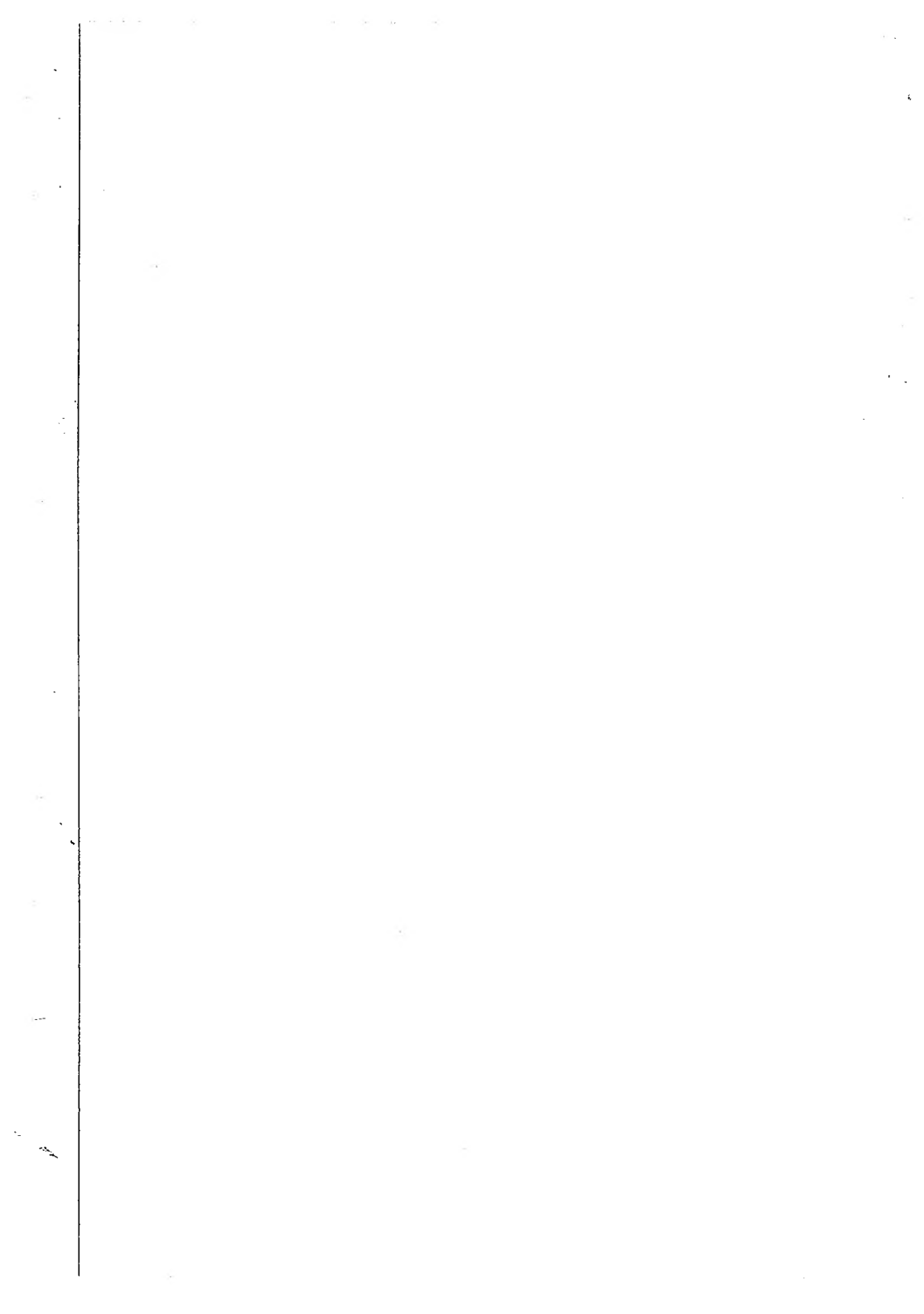
ਦੁਕਤੋਏਕੋਤੋਕਵਿਸੈਨੇਨਾਜੀਦੇਣਅਤਮਸੰਦੀਅਸੀਦੀਦੇਸਲਿਨਾਤੀਭਿਨ

ਅਤੀਮੰਨਾਏਸਿਖਮਿਥੈਸੇਮੇਲਿਏਣਦੁਖੀਕਵਿਕਰਿਨਾਤੀਕਰਣਏਕਾਤ

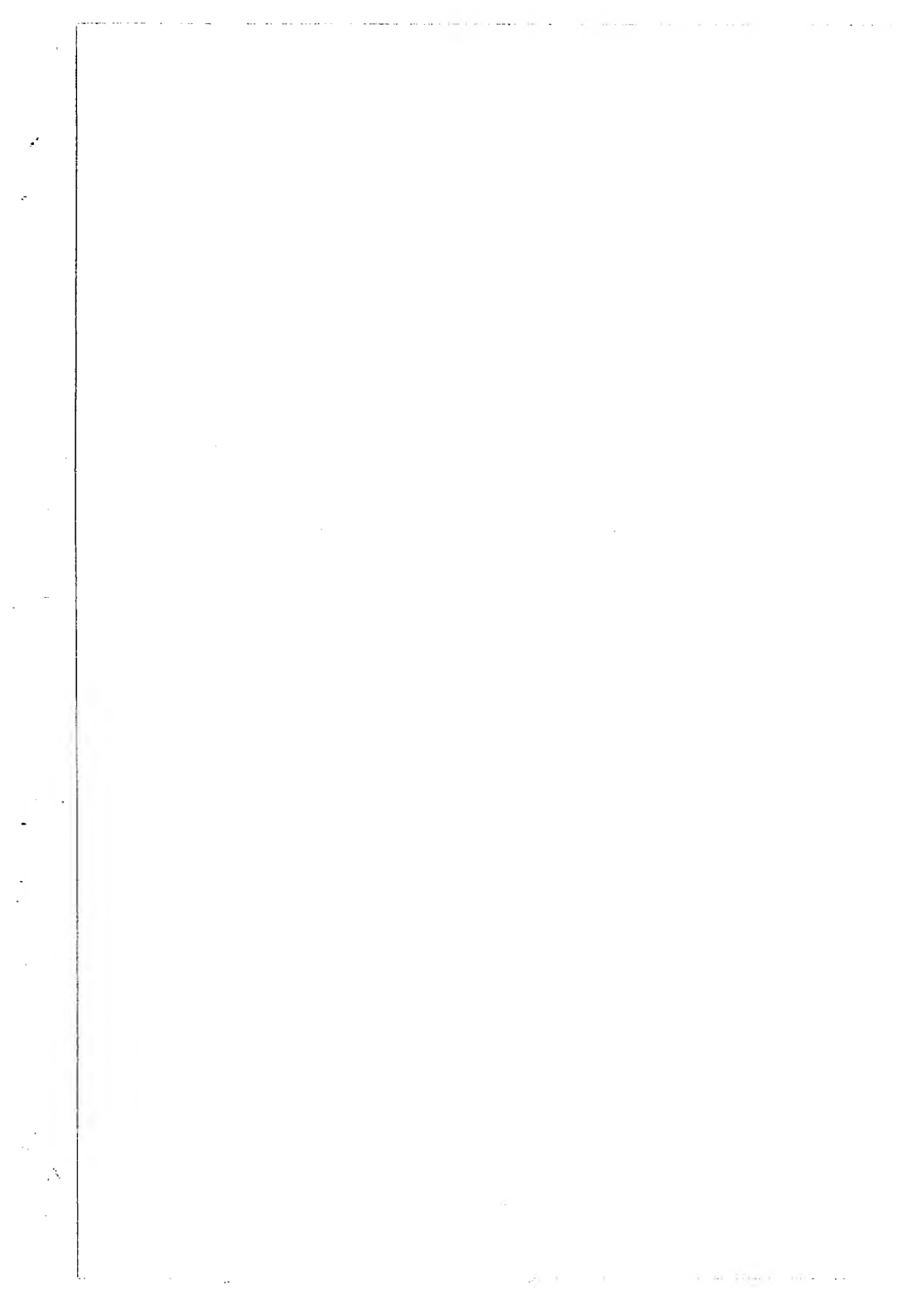
ਕਮੁਕੇਕੀਏ ਜੰਮਤੁ ੧੧ ੫੮ ਸਿਰੀਗੁਰੂ ੧੧ ਨਮੋ ੫੮ ੮

Letter (Hukamnamah) of Guru Gobind Singh  
dated 11th Gun 1675, MS February 6, 1702.









ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸੁ ਪ੍ਰਗਟੁ ਹੋਇ



ਮੇਰੀ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਮੁਸੀਬਤੁ ਸਹੇ  
ਮਨ ਮਨ ਰਬ ਕੁ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਦੇਵ  
ਨਾਮਿ ਸਮਾਧੁ ਰਵੀ ਸੇਵਕੀ  
ਦੀਵੇ ਲਾਗੁ ਲੋਚਨੇ ਸੇਵਕ  
ਗੁਰੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਿਰ ਦਰਗਾ  
ਹਥ ਪਿਪਦੇ ਗੀਤੁ ਮਰੇ ਮਰੇ  
ਕਰਨਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਪੁਰਸ਼ ਸਕਰੀਆ  
ਸੁਖ ਲੇਹੁ ਜੇ ਹਰ ਬਾਬਰ  
ਅਖਰੇ ਦੇ ਗੀਤ ਮੀ ਮਤੁ

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ਭਾਈ ਗੁਲੀ ਮਤ ਭਾਈ ਦੁਨੀ ਚੰਦ ਭਾਈ ਬਖਸੀ ਮਲ ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਪ੍ਰਿਭੁ  
ਕਰੁ ਮਲ ਭਾਈ ਗਤ ਗਇ ਭਾਈ ਰੂਪ ਚੰਦ ਭਾਈ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਮਕੈ ਭਾਈ  
ਮਲ ਭਾਈ ਬਾਬੁ ਗਇ ਭਾਈ ਦਲ ਉਨ ਮਲ ਭਾਈ ਦਇਆ ਮਭਾਈ ਬਾਪ  
ਗਇ ਭਾਈ ਚਰਚੇ ਜਸਰ ਬਾਤੀ ਸੰਗਾ ਤੇ ਸੀ ਮਕਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਜੀ ਕਪਲਾਸਦ  
ਸੀਪਣੇ ਕਰੁ ਰੂਪੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਜਪਣ ਜਨਮੁ ਸਦ ਹਨ ੨੦੦) ਦੁਇ  
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ਧੰਦੁ ਭਾਵੇ ਭਾਈ ਕੋ ਭਾਈ ਤੇ ਸਿੰਘ ਮੇਵ ਰੂਪੇ ਭਾਵੇ ਭਾਈ ਅਕੀ  
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MS. No. 1786

Manuscript (MS. No. 1786) of Mātā Sahib Deyi addressed to the Mātā Sahib Deyi, dated 10 March 1976. Bk/March 1976.



historical record substantiate their distorted names of historical personalities of Sikh history.

LETTER OF GURŪ GOBĪND SĪNGH  
DATED PHĀLGUN 10, VIKRAMĪ SAMVAT 1758,  
FEBRUARY 6, 1702 A.D.

*Ik Omkār Srī Sat Gurūjī<sup>3</sup>*

On the behest of Srī Gurū Gobīnd Sīng jī, the following instructions are hereby sent: Bhāī Mehar Chañd, Dharam Chañd, Karam Chañd; Gurūjī shall be your Divine Protector. Contemplate on the Name *Vāhi-Gurū*, *Vāhi-Gurū*<sup>4</sup>. Your moral life shall be morally and spiritually exalted and felicitated. You all are my Khālsā. The Gurū's command (*farmāis*) is hereby sent for Rs 101 and an elephant. As soon as you receive this command, send the money in the form of *hundī* (Indian Bank Draft) immediately. Whatever other offerings there are from devotees, bring them personally. Whoever come to the Presence of Gurū fully armed, shall receive benediction and shall feel felicitated. His labours of love and service shall bear fruit. He shall achieve nearness to the Gurū. All the offerings of the Gurū or tithes, should not be given to anyone else (i.e. Masañds). Do not have any social relations with the Masañds and their followers. Have no faith in them. If anyone of them repents and wishes to follow the true path, permit him in your company. Do not cause any annoyance or embarrassment to the repentant. These are my standing orders to the Sañgat: *merā hukām hai Sañgatī*.

THE YEAR 1758 VIKRAMĪ SAMVAT AND DATED 10 PHĀLGUN: FEBRUARY 6, 1702

LETTER WRITTEN IN 10 LINES.

The third Letter (Hukamnāmā) is by the Holy Mother of the Khālsā Brotherhood, Mātā Sāhib Devī to the Benāras Sañgat, thirty-one years after the creation of the Khālsā Holy Order, addressing all important Sikhs without the surname "Sīng", as Khālsā.

LETTER OF MĀTĀ SUNDARĪ, WIFE OF GURŪ GOBĪND SINGH  
DATED 19 ASŪN 1779 VIKRAMĪ SAMVAT, SEPTEMBER 20, 1722.

*Ik Omkār Sat Gurūjī*

All the (*Sarbat*) Khālsā shall receive  
The Gracious Protection of the Gurū.

On the behest of Mātā (Suṇdarī) Jī, the following instructions are hereby sent: Bhāi Nain Sukh, Bhāi Fateh Chaṇḍ, Bhāi Kāhnjī. Bhāi Gul Mehar, Bhāi Dūnī Chaṇḍ, Bhāi Bakhshī Mal, Bhāi Sāhib Rāi, Bhāi Kakū Mal, Bhāi Jagat Rāi, Bhāi Rūp Chaṇḍ, Bhāi Kirpā Rām Kaurā, Bhāi Mal, Bhāi Bābū Rāi, Bhāi Chauṇā Mal, Bhāi Dayā Rām, Bhāi Bāgh Rāi, Bhāi Chatur Bhoj. You all are the Khālsā of *Akāl Purakh* (Eternal Lord) comprising the Paṭnā Saṅgat. The Gurū shall be your Protector, contemplate the divine Name (*Vāh*) *Gurū*, *Vāh* (*Gurū*). Your mortal life shall be morally and spiritually exalted and felicitated. On you have been imposed the demand of Rs 200/- (two hundred) for expenditure in Community Kitchen (Laṅgar). As soon as you see this Hukamnāmā (Edict), prepare a Hundī (draft) of the amount and send it with the postal messenger, Bhāi Chet Singh Mewṛā. Bhāi Chet Singh has been sent specifically for this purpose. Send it with Bhāi Chet Singh. You all shall receive benediction and divine favour. Whatever tithes, offerings, donations, gifts, charitable contributions are given by the devotees for the Gurū's treasury, should be sent to our Presence every six months. God's grace shall be on you all. You all are my dear sons. I am highly pleased with you all. The divine Gurū will fulfil all your desires. My sons, my noble Sikhs, these are the times for serving the cause of the Gurū devoutly and enthusiastically. Your service will be accepted in God's presence. The Gurū will bless all your works and efforts, and reward all your endeavours and aspirations. You will live in peace and comfort. Under all conditions God will protect you.

THE YEAR 1779 VIKRAMĪ SAMVAT, DATED ASŪN 19  
SEPTEMBER 20, 1722 A.D.

LETTER OF MĀTĀ SĀHIB DEVĪ, MOTHER OF THE Khālsā  
DATED CHAITRA 11, VIKRAMĪ SAMVAT 1786, MARCH 19, 1730.

*Ek Omkār Sat Gurūjī*

All the Khālsā Residing in Benāras  
Has the Gracious Protection of the Gurū.

*Ek Omkār Sri Vāhigurū jī kī Fateh*

On the behest of Mātā Sāhib Devī jī, the edict is addressed to entire Khālsā (*Sarbat Khālsā*) of the Eternal Being (*Akāl Purakh jī kī Khālsā*): Bhāi Thākur Dās, Bhāi Sobāe Mal Choprā, Bhāi Simbhū Nāth, Bhāi Sāhib Rāi, all the Khālsā residing in Benāras shall receive the gracious protection of the Gurū. Contemplate on the Divine Name *Vāhi-Gurū*, *Vāhi-Gurū*. Your mortal life will be spiritually exalted. I am highly pleased by your devotion. You are my dear sons. The Perfect Gurū shall fulfil all your desires and aspirations. To you, we are sending the demand of Rs 50/- (Rupees Fifty). As soon as you see this Edict (*Hukamnāmā*) send the money by a Hundī (draft) with Bhāi Sādhū Singh postal-messenger to our Presence (*hazūr*). Serve the cause of the Gurū with devotion. Sikhs who send donation for Community Kitchen (*Laṅgar*) with faith and zeal, their labours will be blessed and they shall prosper in abundance.

THE YEAR VIKRAMĪ SAMVAT 1786, CHAITRA SŪDĪ 11

MARCH 19, 1730, WRITTEN IN 14 LINES.

#### AUTHOR'S COMMENTS

Gurū Gobind Singh's letter quoted in the foregoing pages was written three years after the creation of the Khālsā Holy Order. The letter is addressed to Bhāi Mehar Chaṇd, Bhāi Dharam Chaṇd and Bhāi Karam Chaṇd. Gurū Gobind Singh says, "You all are my Khālsā". None of them had to add to his name "Singh"



as all those baptized by the earlier ceremony of *Charan Pāhul* by the Gurū himself or by his predecessors (and not by the Masaṇds) were declared Khālsā. They, of course, now lived strictly according to the Khālsā Code of Conduct. They were authorized to collect tithes, and act as Regional Heads of the Khālsā Missionary Organization in place of the Masaṇds. In this letter Gurū Gobīnd Singh strongly condemns and disowns and even excommunicates the Masaṇds and their followers. But the compassionate Gurū suggests that those who sincerely repent should be forgiven and allowed to accept the Khālsā ideals and taken back in the fold. This proves the thesis that one of the most important reasons for creating the Khālsā Holy Order was to destroy the Masaṇd Missionary system, which had done untold damage to Sikhism.

The second letter was written by Mātā Suṇdarī from Delhī to the Paṭnā Sikh Missionaries on September 20, 1722 A.D. It means it was written fourteen years after the death of Gurū Gobīnd Singh and 23 years after the Khālsā Holy Order was ordained in 1699 A.D. The letter is addressed to the following prominent Sikhs of Paṭnā, who were controlling the missionary work of whole state of Bihār:

Bhāi Nain Sukh	Bhāi Rūp Chaṇḍ
Bhāi Fateh Chaṇḍ	Bhāi Kirpā Rām Kauṛa
Bhāi Kāhn Jī	Bhāi Māl
Bhāi Gul Mehar	Bhāi Bābū Rāi
Bhāi Dūnī Chaṇḍ	Bhāi Chauṇā Mal
Bhāi Bakhsī Mal	Bhāi Dayā Rām
Bhāi Sāhib Rāi	Bhāi Bāgh Rāi
Bhāi Kakū Mal	Bhāi Chatur Bhoj
Bhāi Jagat Rāi	

None of these Khālsā Sikhs has the suffix "Singh" simply because they had already received the baptism, and all they had to do was to accept the additional Rehit (Code of Conduct). Gurū Gobīnd Singh was already their Gurū. The disciple-Gurū relation had already been established. They had already received the *Gurū-*

*mantra* and spiritual instructions. They were not Sahajdhārī Sikhs (novices). They were fully initiated Sikhs. Mātā Suṇḍarī writes: “*Sarbat Saṅgat Sṛī Akāl Purakh jī kḥ Khālsā*: The Congregation of Paṭnā, the leading names of which have been given, were the Khālsā of the Supreme Being.” They were to collect tithes and offerings, and send them to Delhī every six months for use in the Community Kitchen (Laṅgar), which was open to the devotees and the needy. The Holy Mother addresses these Khālsā Sikhs as her dear sons: *Farzānd Putar*.

The third letter is by Mātā Sāhib Devī, the Spiritual Mother of the Khālsā. We find on the top of Gurū Gobind Singh’s letter a cross (+). This was sign symbol of Gurū Gobind Singh, representing his Seal in the form of Sword-like sign. We find it only on the Hukamnāmās of Gurū Gobind Singh. We do not find it in any of Mātā Suṇḍarī’s Hukamnāmās; but we find it in all Mātā Sāhib Devī’s Hukamnāmās. This is obviously because when the Khālsā is baptized, he is told that from that day onward his Spiritual Father is Gurū Gobind Singh and his Spiritual Mother is Mātā Sāhib Devī. So after the death of Gurū Gobind Singh, only Mātā Sāhib Devī was entitled to use it. And she used it quite significantly. The *Ek Omkār Satgurū jī* and the brief note is written by Gurū Gobind Singh in his own hand-writing in the first letter, by Mātā Suṇḍarī in her own hand in the second letter and in Mātā Sāhib Devī’s own hand in the third letter. Mātā Sāhib Devī’s letter was written on March 19, 1730 A.D. twenty-two years after Gurū Gobind Singh’s death. It is addresses to the following persons in Benāras:

Bhāī Thākūr Dās,  
 Bhāī Sobāe Mal Choprā,  
 Bhāī Simbhū Nāth,  
 Bhāī Sāhib Rāi

Again none of these Khālsā Sikhs have the suffix “Singh”. To all, Mātā Sāhib Devī writes, “*Sarbat Khālsā vāsī Benāras*: All the Khālsā residing in Benāras,” and she affectionately calls them her

dear dutiful sons.

It is also worth noting that Gurū Gobind Singh in his letter asks these Khālsā Sikhs without the suffix "Singh", to come fully armed in this presence. They were warrior Sikhs, the Khālsā. Thus all those Sikhs who were baptized by Gurū Gobind Singh between 1675 and 1699 according to Charan Pāhul baptism rites, were declared Khālsā Sikhs, and their name by and large continued to be the same. The suffix "Singh" was not necessarily added to their names. Even the Holy Mothers, Mātā Sāhib Devī and Mātā Sundarī's names remained the same.<sup>5</sup> They did not add the suffix "Kaur" to their names, as was done after the baptism of the Khālsā Holy Order was introduced. These great contemporaries survived for about thirty or forty years after the death of Gurū Gobind Singh, and they were not only respected as Khālsā Sikhs, but played the role of leaders of the Khālsā Saṅgats in Patnā, Benāras and many other places. But after the Khālsā Holy Order was ordained, all those who were baptized by the Pañj Piārās (the Five Elect) had to keep one surname. It was "Singh" (Lion) for the male and "Kaur" (Princess) for the women. The Rājput Hindus still add the word "Singh" to their names. They do not become Khālsā by merely adding this word to their names. Nor are the clean-shaven Sikhs considered Khālsā just because they bear the surname "Singh". Sahajdhārī Siṁdhīs are a thousand times better Sikhs than these clean-shaven and unrepentant apostates from Sikhism. The door is always open for them to do some serious thinking about their inner life and tastes, and after repenting and clearly understanding their moral and spiritual responsibility towards their Gurūs, they can accept baptism and become the Khālsā. They are not outcasts or exiled from Sikhism, but misguided and self-conceited prodigal sons of the Gurū, expected back home sooner or later.

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

- (1) Bhāi Mani Singh, *Sikhān dī Bhagatmālā*. The Sikh Reference Library MS No.

7398 was prepared by a Sikh devotee and presented to Bābā Kalādhārī, son of Bhāī Nihāl Chañd, son of Harkaran Chañd, son of Pahār Chañd, son of Datār Chañd, son of Māṇak Chañd, son of Bābā Dharam Chañd, son of Bābā Lakhmī Chañd, son of Bābā Nānak. The work was presented to him before his death in 1738 A.D., and four years after the martyrdom of the author, Bhāī Manī Singh. The manuscript in Central Public Library No. 2827 Paṭiālā, is dated 1827 A.D. All Manuscripts have certain omissions and errors caused by the scribes. They are actually oversight errors. We generally get the full text by comparing at least three manuscripts. The author has translated the whole text with commentary and is being published in the form of a book *Historical Sermons of the Sikh Gurūs*.

- (ii) Puṇḍit Tārā Singh Narotam, *Srī Gurmat Nirṇay Sāgar*, pp. 344-45.
- (2) *Prem Sumārag*, Published by S.G.P.C. The only manuscript available is the one presented by Sir Attar Singh to Public Library Lāhore. Puṇḍit Tārā Singh includes it among ten prominent Rehitnāmās. Bābā Rām Singh refers to it as a very authentic Rehitnāmā and advises his followers to follow it. The book is divided into 10 large chapters. The fourth chapter is on Sikh marriage ceremony in which the *havan vedī* is advised as the altar of marriage. There are many other suggestions which are neither practiced, nor sanctioned by earlier Rehitnāmās.
- (3) This is the short form of Proem of *Ādi Gurū Granth*. It means, The One God pervades all. Blessings of the *Satgurū*.
- (4) *Vāhi-Gurū* is the *Guru-mantra* in Sikhism. It is referred symbolically as 'Gurū Gurū'. In Sikh Scriptures it is also indicated as, *Satnām*, *mahā-mantra*, *Vāh*, *Vāh*, or Gurū Gurū. The complete *mantra* is rarely mentioned.
- (5) We have about one dozen Hukamnāmās issued by Holy Mothers Mātā Suṇḍarī (between 1717-1730), Mātā Sāhib Devī (between 1726-1734) i.e., eighteen years after the creation of *Khālsā* Holy Order substantiating the thesis. Gyānī Harī Singh in his monograph *Mātā Sāhib Kaur* 1681-1747 (Puṇjābī University Paṭiālā) has invented a theory that before her marriage with Gurū Gobīnd Singh, Mātā Sāhib Devī and her family members were administered the baptism of Double-Edged Sword and their names were changed with surname of "Singh" and "Kaur". There is not single historical document to substantiate this hypothesis of the learned author. Mātā Sāhib Devī had issued eight Hukamnāmās between 1726-1734 and her name has been prominently mentioned as Mātā Sāhib Devī, and not Mātā Sāhib Kaur.



## *Part Four*

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*The Meaning and Significance of  
The Sikh Symbols : Five K's  
Kakārs.*

“Know these five K’s to be emblems of Sikhism,  
Under no condition can one be exempted from them.  
Sword and bracelet, drawer and comb; these four,  
Without hair the fifth, all other emblems are meaningless.”

Gurū Gobind Singh, *Dasam Granth*.

“Do not mercilessly and ruthlessly use your sword on the help-  
less people because one day the Unseen Sword will fall on you  
for your blood”

Gurū Gobind Singh, *Zafarnāmah*, 69.

“When all other means fail to curb tyranny,  
It is but lawful to take up the sword.”

Gurū Gobind Singh, *Zafarnāmah*, 2.

Sword Almighty! You are bestower of peace  
And happiness to saints:  
And the scourge of the villainous reprobates.  
You annihilate the sinners and the wicked.  
Sword Almighty! I take refuge in Thee;  
Victory to Thee, Almighty Sword;;  
Creator and Sustainer of the universe;  
Victory to Thee, Almighty Sword,  
Who art my Sustainer and Protector.

*Dasam Granth*, Gurū Gobind Singh,  
*Bachitar Nāṭak*, *Srī Kāl Jī kī Ustāṭī*, 1:2.

## CHAPTER 12

# THE HAIR, THE COMB AND THE TURBAN OF THE SIKHS

*niśāñī Sikhī in pañj harif kāf.*

*harghiz na bāsād in pañj muāf.*

Know these five K's to be emblems of Sikhism,  
Under no condition can one be exempted from them.  
Sword and bracelet, drawer and comb—these four,  
Without hair the fifth, all other emblems are meaningless.

Gurū Gobind Singh, *Dasam Granth*<sup>1</sup>.

Hair of the head is a symbol of faith, intuition  
of truth, or the highest qualities of the mind.

G.A. Gaskell, *Dictionary of All Scriptures*.

In Sikhism the human body is sacred because in it shines the brilliant light of Wisdom, and more so because it is the home of indwelling Spirit of God. It is not flesh and bones that are important, but what makes this flesh and bones appear to be the living image of God on earth, and that is the mind and the spirit of man. The human body becomes meaningful and a dynamic personality with the dazzling light of the mind and the spirit. The two are inseparable from each other. The health of the body depends on the health of the mind and the Spirit.

According to Sikh theology: "What is in the universe, is also to be found in the human body, and he who seeks it will find it."<sup>2</sup> "Such is the divine play of the Creator that He has reflected the whole Cosmos in the human body."<sup>3</sup> "In the body, we find the wealth of the whole world."<sup>4</sup> "He who is enlightened will search God within himself, and forget all other misleading paths."<sup>5</sup> This



body is the golden fortress in which the eternal Light of His Word shines. It is the temple of God.

In the writings of Gurū Nānak man is represented in his totality; man projected into existence, being-in-spirit and being-in-world. With all the multiplicity around him, man bears within himself the sign and yearning for unity with the whole. Gurū Nānak thus breaks away and stands apart from the Hindu-Buddhist-Jain tradition in this sense, and counsels man against conceiving his transcendence apart from society. Not only does he separate man from humanity, but he recognizes that man cannot achieve his transcendence, save through humanity, and he can save his being through communion with God. It is within an enlightened mind and heart that the Cosmos is evaluated, and Existence and Being are revealed to man in a mystical communication of its transcendence; a communication which man must express in his life and reflect in his actions. "It is at the root of the certitude that is responsible for his constant assertion that each man can recognize in every other man the fact of human transcendence."<sup>6</sup>

*surtī suratī rālārai eti.*

*tanū karī tulhā laṅghih jeti.*

The Word leads to concentration,

Concentration to knowledge,

This is the riddle of the Gurū's Word.

The eternal Light dwells in the human mind.

And the human mind is the emanation of that Light,

And our five senses become the Light's disciple.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Nānak, Rāga Rāmkalī, p. 878.*

The Light reveals itself in the transcendent State or the Tenth Seat of Consciousness (*Dasam Duār*) which is located in the head, and the head is complete and perfect as a seat of revelation only with the hair on it. Without the hair, the head of a mystic is like a maimed limb, never fully capable of containing the full

splendour of divine revelation. Mystics like Eckhart and even Plotinus had a glimpse into this transcendent State, just as a mountaineer sees the peak from the foot of the hill. "Eckhart teaches—at the apex of the mind 'there is a Divine Spark' which is closely akin to God, that it is one with Him, and not merely united with Him."<sup>7</sup>

"Whereas hair on the head, because it grows on the top of the human body, symbolizes spiritual forces and can be equated with the symbolism of water, with the upper ocean, body hair is equivalent to lower ocean." In general, hair represents energy and are related to the symbolism of levels. That is, hair located on the head stands for higher forces. Hair also signifies fertility. Origen used to say, "The Nazarites do not cut their hair because all that is done by just men, prospers and their leaves do not fall." In Hindu symbolism hair like the threads of a fabric symbolizes the lines of force of the universe. A full head of hair represents *elan vital*, and the will to succeed. Hair then comes to symbolize the concept of spiritualized energy. Phaldor, in his *Libro d'oro del Sogno* comments that hair represents the spiritual assets of man. Abundant beautiful hair, for both man and woman, signifies spiritual development. To lose one's hair signifies failure and poverty. Now, the reverse of the loss brought about by forces outside man's control is, in part, willing sacrifice. For this reason Zimmer points out that "all who renounce and defy the principle of procreation and multiplication of life in order to embark upon the path of total asceticism, are bound on principle to cut their hair short. They must stimulate the sterility of the aged and hairless, who form the last link in the chain of generation."<sup>8</sup>

Zimmer brings out two historical truths. Apostles who believed in a life-affirming view of life, valued and nourished hair on their head, as did the Nazarites. While others who espoused life-denying attitude of life, like the ascetic of various faiths, considered shaving off their hair first and foremost duty. Sikhism, as we have already stated, believes in life-affirming view of life.

## HAIR IN SEMITIC TRADITION

"Long heavy hair was considered a sign of vitality. In the case of Samson (he having been dedicated to God), the connection of long hair and bodily strength was based on current views. Absalom's famous hair was considered not only an ornament, but as a token of strength. A bald head was an object of mockery."<sup>9</sup>

"A luxuriant growth of hair on head and chin was regarded by the Hebrews and other Semitic people as an important constituent of manly grace. Solomon's 'youthful horsemen' in the most delightful flower of their age had long hair on their heads. (*Joshua Ant*, viii, vii, 3.) It was admired distinction to have bushy curled locks, black as raven. Amongst women long dark tresses were held most captivating and they have always worn long hair. Men dreaded baldness as suggesting a suspicion of leprosy. (*Lev*, 13 : 40) The Babylonians wore their hair long, binding their heads with turban."<sup>10</sup>

"The Nazarites allowed their hair to grow uncut for religious reason. The High Priest and the priests in general, were expressly forbidden to have their heads shaved. The ancient Egyptians had combs and as the Assyrians also were very careful in dressing their hair, it may be due to mere chance that combs are not mentioned in *The Old Testament*. The Assyrians wore their hair in several braids reaching down to the nape of their neck. As a sign of mourning the head was shaved."

"The Law in Judaism regards it in an entirely different light, as it forbids shaving the head on the ground that Israel belongs to Yahweh only (*Deut*, xiv : i.). Originally shaving in times of mourning indicates that the hair was sacrificed to the dead. The Law also regarded as a heathen custom, the shaving of the head in the centre (*Jer*, ix: 26, 23, xix: 27.) and forbade it as such to Israelites." (*Lev*, xix: 27).

"The ancient conception, mentioned above, that continuing growing hair like the blood is a sign of vitality, sufficiently explains the sacrifice of the hair. The Rabbinical literature in Judaism

reveals that the hair was regarded by the Rabbis as so powerful an augmentation of beauty that married women were recommended to hide it. A man who curled his hair was regarded as a vain man. While Samson was filled with the holy Spirit, his hair made a noise like the bells, and the sound was heard from Zorah to Eshtath." In enumerating the wonders of creation, God pointed out to Job the wisdom shown even in the making of hair. A penalty of one hundred slain is imposed by the Rabbi for pulling an antagonists' hair, because human hair is associated with thoughts. The number of the hair of the human head is said to be one billion and seven thousand."<sup>11</sup>

Among the Hebrews, Arabs and other peoples, cutting the flesh was often associated with shaving the head in mourning, or taking part of the hair to lay on the tomb, or on the funeral pyre. Among the Arabs and Hindus, women in mourning shave their head. The habit of tearing the hair in mourning still persists among the Jews and Hindus. It was also a sign of mourning to let the hair fall unattended and dishevelled (*Ezk*, 24:17, *Jth*, 10:3).

Possession of a leader's hair in primitive magic was esteemed a potent means of getting and retaining a hold on his person by his followers. The Arabs used to cut off the hair of the prisoners before setting them free. Wisdom in the Semitic faiths was always associated with grey hair. Hoary grey hair on the head was the crown of glory, the reward of a life of righteousness. For grey hairs to come down on the grave in peace was token of a life of God's favour. Grey hair laid in men obligations of honourable and chivalrous conduct. White hair was an element of glorious appearance (*Mac*, 15:31), especially that of divine majesty (*Dt*, 7:8, *Rev*, 1:14). The hair of Samson was regarded as the seat of strength. (*Jg*, 16:22). The Jews swore by the hair (*Mt*, 5). One of the most binding oaths in the East now is by the beard.<sup>12</sup>

#### HAIR IN THE GREEK PHILOSOPHIC TRADITION

The Greeks loved rich waving hair, the youthful gods Bacchus and

Apollo were figured with plenteous locks. Enslaved foreigners were forced to shave. It is the Egyptians who loved completely shaving their heads and faces, and they ridiculed long hair of the Asiatics and Greeks. Women never shaved their hair. Offering the hair to the Deity was common among the Greeks and Hindus. The idea more or less consciously underlying these practices probably was, that by means of his hair, part of himself, instinct with his life, the devotee formed stable link or connection with sanctuary and the deity, he worshipped. If an important part of life was conceived as residing in the hair, we can see why that of consecrated persons was so cared for. Priests not only allowed their hair to grow but kept them untouched."<sup>13</sup>

Plato called human hair the natural ornament of the head, and the Greeks, says Prof. Becker, "bestowed great pains on the natural ornament of the head, the hair as Plato calls it. They were averse to having it covered in any manner. Winkelman remarks that the natives of the South are endowed with greater profusion of hair than the inhabitants of northern lands, and by the Greeks its growth was carefully cherished as it was thought to contribute greatly to render the figure noble and attractive. No less attention was lavished on the beard, which was not looked on as a troublesome incumbrance, but as dignified ornament of maturity and old age. Hence the whiskers, the moustaches and the beard were allowed to grow. None of these parts were shorn, but of course there were variations in the wear, according to race, abode, condition and individual character. Compare for instance the busts of Solon and Lycurgus or those of Plato, Antisthenes and Chryasippus. Also see the busts of Demosthenes, Diogenes, Epicurus, Epimenidus, Euripedes, Epicrates, Aeschines, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Aristophanes and Zeno. "Pythagoras kept long hair, beard etc." Eratosthenes says, as Phavorinus quotes him in the eighth book of his Universal History, that Pythagoras was the first man who ever practiced boxing in a scientific manner in the forty-eight Olympiad, having his hair long and being clothed

in purple. It is recorded of Servius, the sixth king of Rome that his hair emitted sparks on being combed."<sup>14</sup>

"Monuments as well as the writers tell us that men wore their hair long in the Homeric period, also down to the fifth century. We sometimes find depicted hair of such length and thickness that it seems almost incredible that a man's hair could have been so much developed."<sup>15</sup> Epictetus argues strongly in favour of wearing long hair. Flavius Domitianus Augustus persecuted the philosophers and ordered them to go to exile. Some of them, in order to conceal their profession of philosophy, shaved their beards. Epictetus would not take off his. And during these days when one of his companions addressed him: "Come, then, Epictetus shave yourself." Epictetus replied, "If I am a philosopher, I answer, I will not shave myself." "But" said the other, "I will take off your head." "If that will do you any good, take it off", replied Epictetus.<sup>16</sup>

"Alexander brought into fashion the custom of shaving, but there can be no doubt that it was partially adopted at a much earlier period, though the practice was certainly regarded as contemptible. Chrysippus expressly states that this new custom of shaving was introduced by Alexander. Plutarch asserts that Alexander caused his soldiers to be shaved from the motives of strategic caution. The innovation was stoutly resisted in many States, and was forbidden by special laws which do not seem to have had much effect."<sup>17</sup>

#### HAIR AND SHAVING IN HINDU, JAIN AND BUDDHIST TRADITION

Hair has had a positive and negative value and interpretation in Hindu, Buddhist and Jain tradition. To keep hair is to love vital activities of life, to accept social responsibility and to live in a society as part of society. But to shave the hair means renouncing society, renouncing the social ethics of life.

## HAIR: THE GLORY OF MAN'S VITAL ENERGY

According to Apastambha's *Aphorisms*, "He who wishes to be consecrated according to the rites of the *Vedas* shall wear all his hair in one knot, or let him tie the lock on the crown of head in a knot."<sup>18</sup> The *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* says: "When he has performed the consecration ceremony (*Abhiṣeka*) he does not shave his hair. The reason why he does not shave his hair is this: that the collected essence of the waters, wherewith he is then sprinkled (anointed), is vigour, and it is the hair of the head that it reaches first when he is sprinkled; hence were he to shave his hair, he would cause that glory to fall off from him, he would sweep it away; therefore he does not shave his hair."<sup>19</sup> "The clothing of the twice-born (Brāhmiṇ) should be of linen or cotton or also a deer skin, or a cloth entirely dyed with reddish colour. There should also be girdle of *mūṅgā*, and he should have matted hair."<sup>20</sup> *Nāradya Dharmaśāstra* says that Brāhmiṇs could not be punished by death sentence even for such heinous crimes as man slaughter. "A Brāhmiṇ must not be subject to corporal punishment. For him shaving his head, banishing him from the town, and parading him on an ass shall be his punishment".<sup>21</sup> Thus shaving the head was equated with capital punishment for the Brāhmiṇs.

Heinrich Zimmer says, "Śivā's tresses are long and matted, partly streaming, partly stacked in a kind of pyramid. This is the hair of the model Yogī of the gods. Supra-normal life-energy amounting to the power of magic, resides in such wilderness of hair, untouched by the scissors. Similarly, the celebrated strength of Samson, who with naked hands tore asunder the jaws of a lion and shook down the roof of a pagan temple, resided in his uncut hair.... Much of the womanly charm, the sensual appeal to the Eternal Feminine, *das Ewig-Weibliche, le charme eternal*, is in the fragrance, the flow and lustre of beautiful hair. On the other hand, anyone renouncing the generative forces of the vegetable-animal realm revolting against the procreative principle of life, sex, earth, and nature to enter upon the spiritual path of absolute asceticism

has first to be shaved. He must simulate the sterility of an old man whose hair has fallen, and who no longer constitutes a link in the chain of generation. He must coldly sacrifice the foliage of the head."<sup>22</sup>

Even during the early Buddhist period, shaving was the sign of ugliness and contemptible. But Buddhism made shaving essential for renunciation. The early Pārsīs also considered shaving a sin and crime. The Epistle of *Manūskihār*, a Pārsī Text says, "And concerning handsomeness and ugliness in themselves, which are only through having taken up an opinion and belief, there is a change even through time and place; for any of the ancients whose head was shaved was as it were ugly, and it was so settled by law, and it was sin worthy of death for them; and then its habits did not direct the customs of the country to shave the head of man."<sup>23</sup>

Shaving the hair was also punishment for women. "When a married woman commits adultery, her hair should be shaved, she shall have to lie on a low couch, receive bad clothings, and the removal of all the sweepings shall be assigned to her as her occupation."<sup>24</sup>

#### SHAVING THE HEAD: A SYMBOL OF ESCAPE FROM SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL RESPONSIBILITIES

"Full of hindrance is household life, a path defiled by passion, free as the air is the life of him who has renounced all worldly things. How difficult is it for the man who dwells at home to live the higher life in all its fulness, in all its purity, in all its bright perfection. Let me then cut off my hair and beard, let me clothe myself in orange coloured robes, and let me go forth from a household life to a homeless state."<sup>25</sup>

The Šūfī *derwishes*, the Christian monks, the Hindu ascetics, all shave off their heads with this sense of escape from the mundane world to live purely in the spiritual world. And the reason as Zimmer points out is, "to renounce and defy the principle of



procreation and multiplication of life in order to embark upon the path of total asceticism,” and this principle is inevitably associated with shaving the hair. Heinrich Zimmer says, “The ascetic hostility to the hair of the human organism is so excessive in the extreme sect of the Jains that they will tolerate no hair whatsoever on the person of an ordained holyman. Part of their ritual of ordination consists in a thorough weeding out of every single hair growing on the head and body. Here the idea of the tonsure is, so to say, carried to its limit; and correspondingly, the Jain idea of self-renunciation is drastic beyond bounds. In accordance with their archaic, fundamentalist and thoroughgoing doctrine, the Jains so scheduled their disciplines of bodily mortification, that in old age these ideally culminate in death from an absolute fast. As with the hair, so with the last vegetable requirement of the flesh, the revolt against the principles of life is pressed to the end.”<sup>26</sup>

#### THE HAIR, THE COMB AND THE TURBAN OF THE SIKHS

We have already stated earlier in this chapter that according to Sikh philosophy of a physically complete man, a human being must preserve all their hair on his head and face as an essential part of his body. Just as the skull performs the protective function of the brain, the hair as an inseparable part of the skull performs the function of the preservation of the *elan-vital* of a human being. The complete Man, the Man who is conceived in Sikh Scriptures as a man with hair and turban on his head—“*sābat-sūrat dastār sirrā*: Complete Man with hair, beard and turban on his head.”<sup>27</sup>

The hair of the head is also inseparably connected with the comb and turban in Sikh discipline. The continued association of the comb as one of the K's (*Kaṅghā* : Comb) signifies that the hair should be kept clean and healthy like other parts of the body. Matted hair or dishevelled hair is not permitted as it is a sign of lethargy, uncleanness, indifference to social responsibility and cynical attitude of life. Going out bareheaded in the streets is an

offence. Not to keep the hair clean by shampooing it regularly is also a serious transgression of the Sikh Code of Conduct.

In the classical Indian tradition, we have already shown that there were two ideals: One of the recluse, who shunned society and preferred the life of cloister or the cave, the other of the *Rishī* (*Rṣi*) or *Kṣatriyā* who lived in society and accepted all responsibilities and challenges of life and yet he was wedded to righteousness and justice:

Dande eva hi rajendra  
Ksatradhrama na mundam

*Mahābhārata, Sānti-parva, 23, 46.*

Commenting on it Dr Rādhākṛishnan writes; "His *Svadharmā* or law of action requires him to engage in battle. Protection of right by accepting battle, if necessary, is the social duty of *Kṣatriyā* and not renunciation. His duty is to maintain order by force and not become an ascetic by shaving off his hair, "O thou best of men" says the author of *Mahābhārata*, (*Udyoga Parva*), "there are only two types who can pierce the constellation of the sun and reach the sphere of Brahm. The one is the *sannyāsīn* who is steeped in Yoga and the other is the warrior who falls in the battle fighting."<sup>28</sup> Gurū Gobind Singh combined the holiness of the *Rishī* (*Rṣi*) and Christ with the social and political responsibility of the *Kṣatriyā* and gave to the world the *Khālsā* ideals, which come very near Plato's ideal of Philosopher King; the Philosopher with hair and beard and the highest enlightenment and administrative ability.

The hair of the *Khālsā* is sacred to him because the Five Beloved Knights (*Pañj Piārās*) of Gurū Gobind Singh anointed them with *Amrit*: the baptismal water of immortality. The hair, the head, the mind and the consciousness (*surtā*) have been made alive and vibrant with a new life.

"When He touched my hair and blessed me, how can I bear my hair being shorn. The Sikh is the dedicated. I nestle the fragrance of His touch in my tresses.... The inspired personality of this

Brotherhood is song-strung, love-strung, gentle, fearless, death despising, even death courting, seeking no reward for incessant self-sacrifice in the name of the Master, dying like moths round the lamp, living like heroes, shining like orbs, intoxicated, sweetly exhilarated every moment of life, elevated above sorry details of things, wishing well to the whole universe of life, and desiring nothing but the lyrical repetition of His Name.... The breath of Man is to resound with it, his pores to flow with its nectarean bliss. The eyes go half-upwards under the upper lids, the forehead seems to be filled with nectar..... My Brotherhood of the *Khālsā* is scattered in the history of man in rare persons. All those who call themselves Brothers (*Khālsā*), but are not so inwardly, spiritually, intentionally, consciously and subconsciously of the Gurū, are struck off the Roll."<sup>29</sup>

Thus the hair of the Sikh is a symbol of his vow to live for the love of God; a vow to seek immortality through contemplation and action, a vow to dedicate mind, body and soul at the altar of Truth, Justice Freedom for which the Gurūs lived and died. Personal liberation (*mukṭī*) and life in heaven are never the aim of an enlightened Sikh. The hair must be neatly tied in a tress knot on the apex of the head and a comb tucked in it, ready for use at any time, and a turban tied round it. The turban of the Sikhs is thus an inseparable part of his religious and cultural personality.

All the Sikh Gurūs kept hair and beard, and all the Sikh Gurūs and Apostles wore turbans. The oldest painting of Gurū Nānak, which Rām Rāi took with him from his father Gurū Hari Rāi, now preserved at Dehrādūn as a relic, shows Gurū Nānak wearing the *Paṭhān* type turban, which was worn by the Puñjābīs. This type of turban with little modification continued to be worn by the first five Gurūs. It was a little smaller in size, and worn more gracefully than the common *Paṭhān* did, in the manner of the Šūfī saints. From the time of Gurū Hargobīnd the Rājput style became common, and it was patronized even by the Mughal rulers. Out of this style the Sikh warriors who carried a quoit on their heads,

developed variations which we see in the paintings of the Sikh warriors. The Sikh princes of Ranjīt Singh's *durbār* developed a distinct style of their own, out of which emerged many modern styles, fundamentally resembling one another.

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

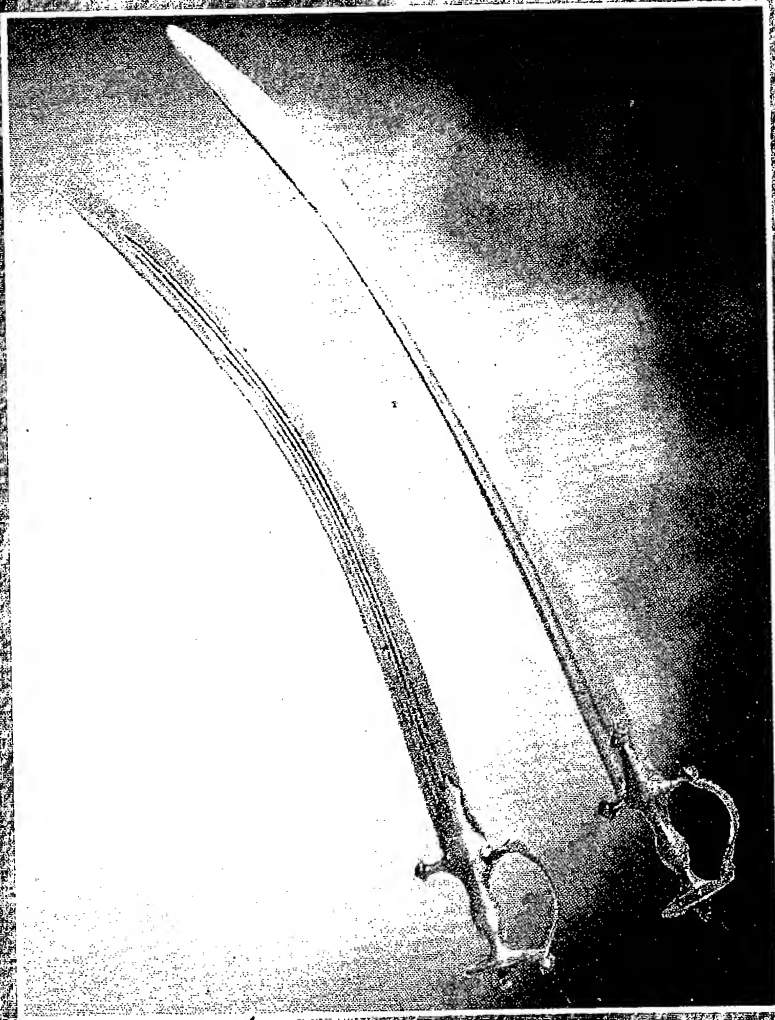
- (1) *niśānī Sikhī in pañj harif kāf.*  
*harghiz na bāsād in pañj muāf.*  
*kaṛā kārdo, kachh, kanghā, bidān.*  
*bilā kes hech ast, jumlā nishān.*

Gurū Gobind Singh, *Sarb Loh Granth*, (MS: Hazūr Sāhib),

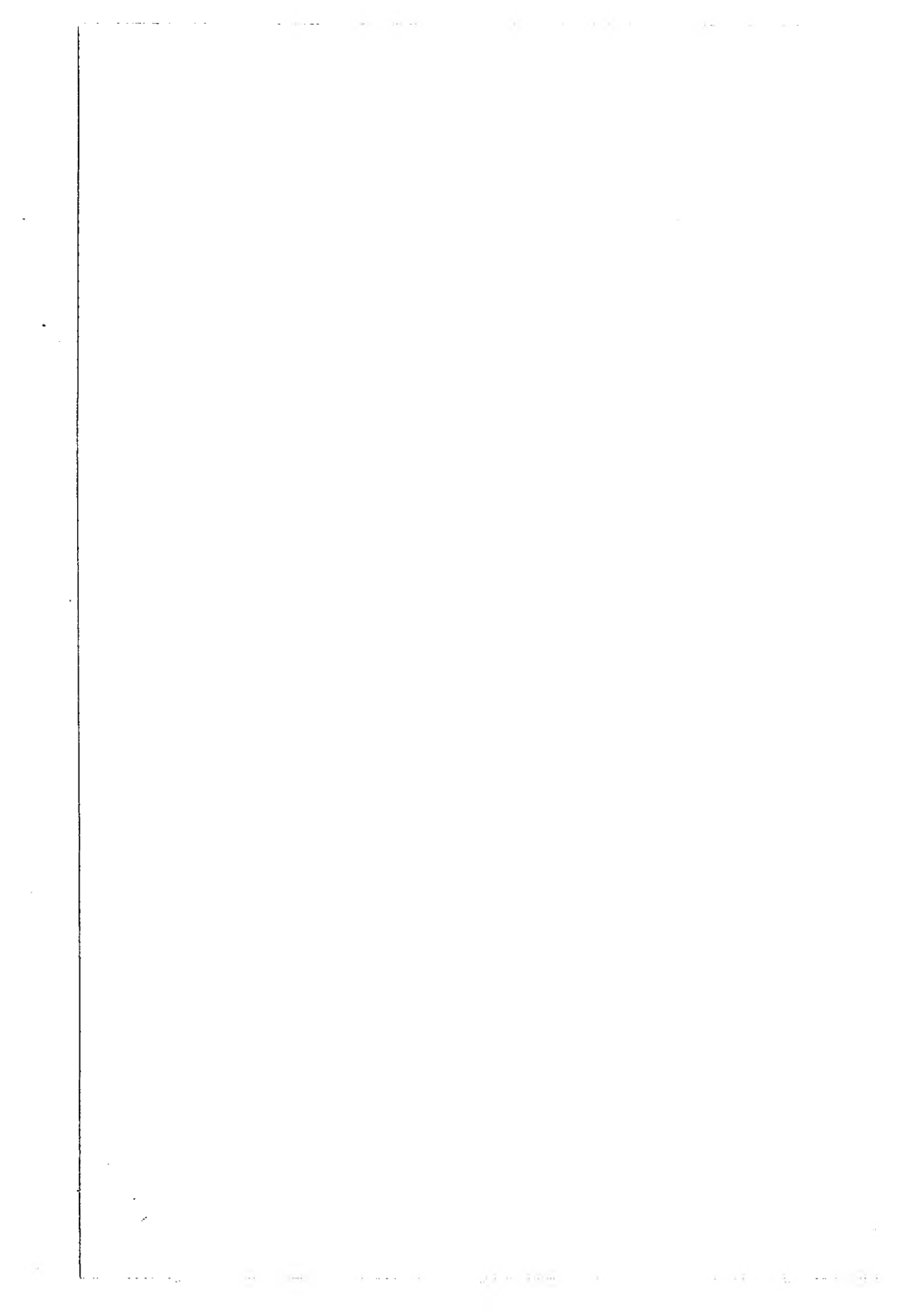
Dasam Granth, (Sangrūr MS).

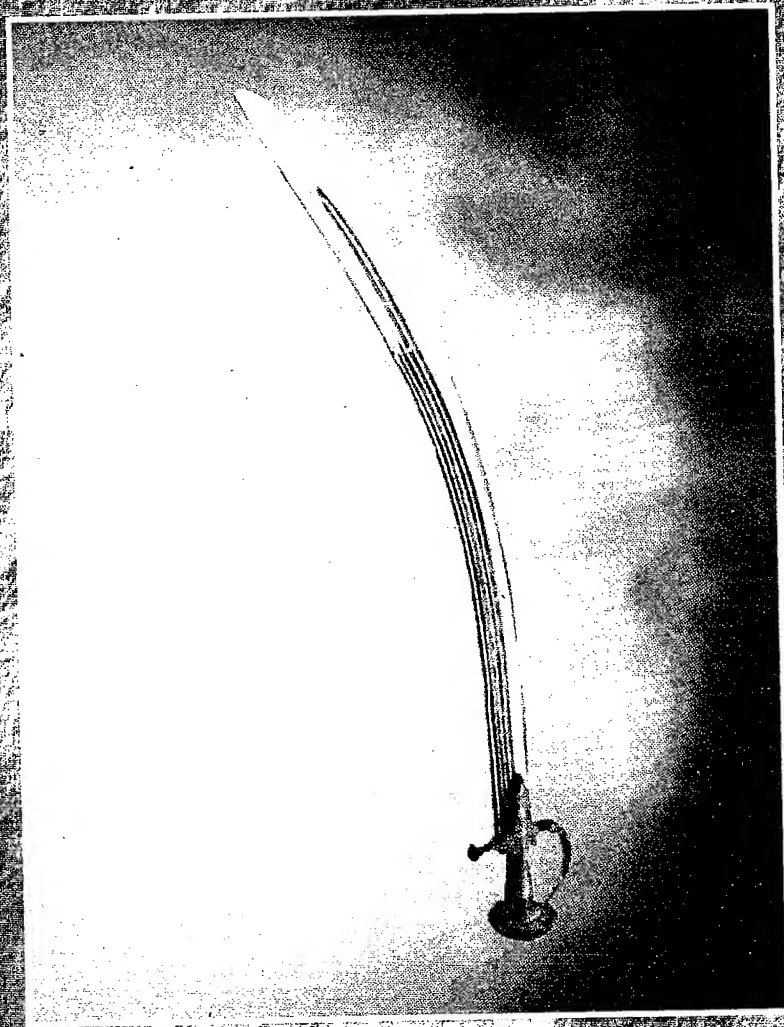
- (2) *Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Nānak, *Rāga Mārū*, p. 110. see also, p. 698.
- (3) *Ibid.*, Gurū Amar Dās, *Rāga Mājh*, p. 117.
- (4) *Ibid.*, *Rāga Sūhī*, p. 754.
- (5) *Ibid.*, *Rāga Sūhī*, p. 754.
- (6) Trilochan Singh, *Gurū Nānak's Religion: A Comparative Study of Religions*, p.15.
- (7) W.R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, p. 115.
- (8) Cirlot J.E., *Dictionary of Symbols*, p. 134.
- (9) *Jewish Encyclopaedia*.
- (10) James Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*.
- (11) *Jewish Encyclopaedia*.
- (12) James Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*.
- (13) *Ibid.*
- (14) Dharam Anant Singh, *Plato and the True Enlightener of the Soul*, pp. 156-57.
- (15) Blummer, *The Home Life of the Ancient Greeks*, p. 64.
- (16) *Discourses of Epictetus*, Tr. G. Long, Bk. I, Chap. 11.
- (17) Dharam Anant Singh, *Plato and the True Enlightener of the Soul*, p. 159.
- (18) *Apastamba's Aphorisms*, Tr. George Buhler, p. 8.
- (19) *The Śatpatha Brāhmaṇa* (Mahāyāna School) Tr. Julius Eggeling, p. 120.
- (20) *Anugita*, Tr. Kāshīnāth Trinibak Tilang, p. 361.
- (21) *Nāradya Dharamaśāstra*, Tr. Julius Jolly, p. 163.
- (22) Heinrich Zimmer, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*, p. 157.
- (23) *Epistles of Manūśkihār*, p. 408.

- (24) *Nāradyā Dharmaśāstrā*, p. 83.
- (25) *Teṇṇiga Suttanta*, Tr. T.W. Rhys David, p. 187.
- (26) Heinrich Zimmer, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*, p. 166.
- (27) This hymn of Gurū Arjan in *Rāga Mārū*, *Sohile (Ādi Gurū Granth*, p. 1084), which is a treatise of Muslim ceremony of circumcision, also gives a glimpse of the philosophy of the Sikh Gurūs. The man who is conceived to be physically and spiritually the image of God, is conceived in Sikh theology a complete man as conceived by God with hair and turban on his head.
- (28) Dr S. Rādhākṛishnan, *Gītā*, Tr., p. 112.
- (29) Pūran Singh, *The Spirit Born People*. pp. 122-24.



The Sword of Political Sovereignty (*Min*) and the Sword of Spirituality (*Pir*) of Gurmehar Singh, preserved at Sarai-i-Majlis, Sahib.





The sword of the Swami Shri Gopal Singh





## CHAPTER 13

### THE SWORD OF GURŪ GOBĪND SĪNGH

Gurū Gobīnd Sīng received from Gurū Nānak  
The Sword, the Bowl and Victory Unfailing.

Gurū Gobīnd Sīng<sup>1</sup>

When all other means fail to curb tyranny,  
It is but lawful to take up the Sword.

Gurū Gobīnd Sīng, *Zafarnāmah*, 2.

### THE SWORD-LIKE SPIRIT OF THE SIKH GURŪS

Gurū Nānak was born with a sword in his heart and soul. It was a sword, he used relentlessly against hypocrisy, cruelty and terror. He denounced religious *thugs*, and condemned ruthless kings and ministers as they had never been condemned before. Lamenting and protesting against Bābur's massacre, he wrote, "Terrible has been the slaughter, loud have been the cries of the sufferers. Did this not awaken pity in Thee, O Lord? If a strong power attacks another strong power, no one would grieve, none would complain. But when fierce tigers prey on helpless cattle, Thou Herdsman, must answer for it."<sup>2</sup>

When Sattā and Balwañḍ, the Bards of the Sikh Gurūs, describe the anointing ceremony of Gurū Nānak's successor, Gurū Aṅgad, they say, "Nānak placed the umbrella of sovereignty on the head of Aṅgad. He has also graced the heart of Aṅgad with the mighty sword (*kharag*) of divine wisdom. While yet living in this world, Gurū Nānak installed his disciple Aṅgad as his successor and Gurū, and became the disciple of this successor."<sup>3</sup> Thus Gurū

Nānak passed on his Sword of Spirit to Gurū Aṅgad.

Gurū Arjan, the fifth Gurū, uses military metaphors throughout his writings. He used these military metaphors to arm his disciples with the Sword of the Spirit, without which no battle can be fought. Gurū Arjan writes:

*garībī gadā hamārī.*

*khanā sagal renū chhārī.*

Humility is my spiked mace,

To be the dust under everyone's feet

Is my Two-Edged Sword.

None of the wicked can withstand this weapon.

The perfect Gurū has taught me this.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Arjan, Rāga Sorath, p. 628.*

And with these weapons Gurū Arjan became the first martyr of Indian history. He had already started giving military training to his son and successor, Hargobīnd.

#### THE SWORD OF GURŪ HARGOBIND

When the Sixth Master, Gurū Hargobīnd succeeded his father at the age of 11, he put on two swords. One, he said, was the "Sword of Spirituality", (*Pirī*) and the other was the "Sword of Political Sovereignty", (*Mīrī*). The Sikhs were to uphold both Religious and Political Freedoms wherever they existed. One was utterly useless without the other. They were not merely to worship God and leave their political and religious freedom in the hands of others and live like slaves, but to fight for fundamental freedom and uphold their dignity and religious, political and cultural identity and integrity, no matter in which country they lived. Nor were the Sikhs supposed to indulge in any such political thinking and action which was devoid of moral and spiritual values. Religion without political freedom and dignity was abject slavery and politics without religion was organized barbarism.

## THE SWORD OF GURŪ GOBIṆD SINGH

We have already stated in Chapter 3 that for Gurū Gobiṇd Singh the Sword was symbol of God's Power, Justice and Grace of Divine protection. Through this Invisible and Visible Sword, God protects the saints and the virtuous, and punishes the evil-doers, no matter in which garb evil operates in the world. Contrary to the traditions of *ahiṃsā* (non-violence) carried to extremes of submission of tyranny, Gurū Gobiṇd Singh gave a new moral and spiritual direction and new Names of God, based on His Attributes as the Saviour of the weak and humble, and Destroyer and Annihilator of the wicked. Most of the Names of God in Indian tradition emerged out of the divine personality of dancing Kṛṣṇa and pathetic lover Rāma. The Names which he gave to God, centred around the Saṅskṛit word for Sword, like: *Khaṛag* (*Braj Bhāṣā*: *Khag*); *As* and its compound words *As-dhuj*, *Asketu*. The Persian words *Tegh* and *Shamshir* are also frequently used.

*khag khaṇḍ bihaṇḍam khal dal khaṇḍam*

*aṭī raṇ maṇḍam barbaṇḍam.*

Sword (*khag*) that smites in a flash,

That scatters the armies of the wicked,

In the great battlefield.

Thou symbol of valour,

Thine arm is irresistible;

Thy brightness shineth forth.

The blaze of Thy splendour dazzles like the sun.

Sword, *As*, Thou art Protector of the saints,

Thou art the scourge of the wicked.

Scatterer of sinners, I take refuge in Thee.

*Jai Teghaṇ*: Victory to Thee, Supreme Sword; Saviour and Sustainer;

*Jai Teghaṇ*: Sword Supreme, Victory to Thee.

*Dasam Granth*, Gurū Gobiṇd Singh, *Bachitar Nāṭak*, 1:2, p.38.

Thus Gurū Gobiṇd Singh has clearly explained in his own words the meaning of the 'Sword' as he uses it. His Sword "scatters the wicked" has "the dazzling splendour of the sun". It is "the

Protector of the saints", "scourge of the wicked", "Refuge of seers and Heroes". The Sword, the Eternal and Living Presence of God, Redeemer and Saviour of suffering humanity is ever victorious. The Sword (*Tegh*) in Sikh theosophy goes hand in hand with *Degh* (lit: Cauldron or Bowl), the symbol of undiminishing store of food or physical sustenance. *Degh* and *Tegh*, as Gurū Gobīnd Singh uses, are the key word symbols of moral and spiritual supremacy of those, who consider God as the divine Giver and Protector.

*Mahā Kāl rakhvār hamāro.*

*Mahā Loh mai kiṅkar thāro.*

Knowing that I am Thine,

Protect me graciously Lord,

Single out my enemies, Lord,

And destroy them one by one.

May there flourish in the world,

*Degh*: the Bowl of undiminishing Food,

*Tegh*: the Sword, the symbol of God's Power and Justice.

Gurū Gobīnd Singh, *Dasam Granth*, *Krishan Avatār*, 435-36, p.310.

In his letter to Aurangzeb which he wrote when Aurangzeb broke his oath on the *Kor'ān* for peaceful settlement, Gurū Gobīnd Singh vividly portrays the havoc wrought by the sword of the Mughal despot and the Protective grace of the Invisible Sword, the Presence of Almighty God. He writes:

*mazan tegh bar khūn kas bedregh.*

*turā nīz khūn charḡh rezad ba tegh.*

Do not mercilessly and ruthlessly use your sword

On the helpless people,

Because one day the Unseen Sword

Will fall on you for your blood.

*Dasam Granth*, Gurū Gobīnd Singh, *Zafarnāmah*, 69, p.1392.

When all peaceful means fail to curb the oppressive tyranny of a totalitarian regime, it is righteous, says Gurū Gobīnd Singh, to

resort to the sword:

*chu kār az hamah hālte dar guzašt.*

*ḥalāl ast burdan ba Šamšir dast.*

When all other means fail to curb tyranny,

It is but lawful to take up the sword.

*Dasam Granth*, Gurū Gobīnd Sīng, *Zafarnāmah*, 22, p.1390.

Gurū Gobīnd Sīng also writes about the 'Sword of Wisdom.' "*Giān-kī-bāḍhanī*" which dispels all darkness and sweeps away all cowardice. In *Kṛishan Avatār* he gives his own philosophy, after writing the life of Lord Kṛṣṇa, based on some hitherto unavailable version of *Dasam Sikanḍ* of *Bhāgavatam*, "Blessed is he in this world, who always has the Name of God on his lips, and in his heart is ever enshrined the spirit of true warriors. Knowing this body to be transient, he sails on the boat of glorifying God and crosses the stormy ocean of existence. He makes his body a mansion of patience, and within it he lights the blazing lamp of Divine Wisdom. Holding the Sword of Divine Knowledge (*Giān-kī-bāḍhanī*) in his hands, he sweeps away all cowardice out of his inner life."<sup>4</sup>

Professor Pūran Sīng rightly opines: "Every Sikh is to wear His Sword. Not his own. *Kīrpān* is gift from the Gurū. It is not an instrument of offence or defence; it is mind made intense by the love of the Gurū. The Sikh is to have a sword-like mind. It is the visible sign of an intensely sensitive soul. It is but the symbol of the myriad personality of the Gurū's Sikh that knows no defeat, no disappointment, the personality that is unconquerable in its hope and in its spiritual radiance. Gurū Gobīnd Sīng says, "I will make one Sikh dominate over a million." This realm is the kingdom of the illumined mind. The highly intensified and developed intellect naturally becomes overpowering so much so that it becomes fascinating and attractive in a physical sense. It gather its own moths like the intense flame of a night lamp. The presence of a great spiritual man overpowers millions. What is mind, if it has

not the flash of the lightning and the sword? All conquests in the fields of life are mental and moral; physical conquests have meaning and significance, if they are over the forces of evil. He who wears the Gurū's Sword is a complete man, full grown in moral responsibility and spiritual disciplines."<sup>5</sup>

### *KHAṆDĀ: THE INSIGNIA OF THE KHĀLSĀ PAṆTH*

In the picture opposite page 236, we have given the picture of the Insignia of the *Khālsā Paṇth*, called *Khaṇḍā*: the Double-Edged Sword. In the centre is the Two-Edged Sword, explained in detail in Chapter 7, as the Creative Power of God which controls the destiny of the whole animal and human creation. It is the Sovereign Power over life and death. One edge of the Sword symbolizes divine Justice, which chastises and punishes the wicked oppressors; the other edge symbolizes Freedom and Authority, governed by moral and spiritual values. On the outside of the Two-Edged Sword, we can see two traditional Swords. (i) One, on the left is the Sword of Spiritual Sovereignty (Pīrī) and (ii) On the right is the Sword of Political Sovereignty (Mīrī). There must always be a balance between the two, and this balance is emphasized by a circle inside. This circle is the *Chakra*: Quoit, which was used by the ancient and medieval warriors, and Sikh warriors wore it on their turban. The Chakra is the symbol of all embracing Divine Manifestation, including everything and wanting nothing, without beginning and end, neither first nor last, Timeless Absolute. It is the symbol of oneness, of Unicity of Justice and Humanity and Immortality. Almost all Sikh warriors used to wear it in the eighteenth century. It is still worn on the turban by Sikh soldiers of the Sikh Regiment in the Indian Army. The Chakra which was worn by the great martyr Bābā Dīp Singh is still preserved in the sanctum sanctorum of the Akāl Takhat. On it is inscribed the *Mūl-Mantra*: the Proem of the Sikh Scriptures, and that is what it symbolizes.

In U.S.A. Yogī Bhajan, who has followers wearing perfect Sikh forms outwardly, has corrupted all Sikh doctrines and symbols by his Tāntric and pervert interpretations of Khaṇḍā. In the picture opposite page 237 Yogī Bhajan's version of the Khaṇḍā (the Khālsā Insignia) reprinted from his cult Journal *Beads of Truth*, (Winter Solstice 1973), both on the title page and page 5 of the magazine. The double-edged sword of the Khālsā Insignia has been replaced by a picture of a beautiful American woman, wearing Indian *Sārī* and robes.

Yogī Bhajan's obsession with women and sex is singular. He wishes to impose women and sex on Sikh symbols and *mantras*, where it is sacrilegious to do so. This is one of the many typical instances. This picture was seen taking a place of pride in the 3HO Los Angeles *Āśram* when I visited it in May, 1977, and was put up along with the pictures of Sikh Gurūs. He calls it the *Yantra* (*Jaṇtra*) of his goddess *Bhagvatī*, *Chañḍī*, *Durgā*.

He says on page 5 of this issue: "Her yantra (Puñjābī jaṇtra) defined in the footnote as *maṇḍala*, or the pictures representing the mantra is the true source of God protecting you. The centre of the world, it rolls on a two-edged sword of the being, the meditation and positivity. *Bhagvatī*, the *Śakti* is infinity. And every mantra must have a Jaṇtra, and this (Khaṇḍā) is her jaṇtra, and this is her being, these are her feathers." The editors of this 3HO magazine make it clear that these are the inspired words of the Yogī Bhajan, the only *Mahān* Tāntric in the world. Yogī's full speech is given alongside, in which he says, "I am told, 75,000 people in Los Angeles alone do not know how to relate to women. And there are equal number of women who do not know how to relate to men. I have great sympathy for perversion."

For Yogī Bhajan, the Khālsā Insignia is now a Jaṇtra (*Yantra*) of his goddess *Bhagvatī*, that is *Durgā*. And he unashamedly connects it with women and sex, and all that goes with abnormal perversions, idealized by Tāntrics and vigorously condemned by the Sikh Gurūs and all medieval Bhaktās as *Sākat Mat*. Although



the 3HO Americans, who have adopted Sikhism, put on excellent Khālsā uniform and also perform some other external rites, their attempts to interpret Sikhism in terms of their own brand of *Tantra*, their mystifying yantras and mantras, their crude *āsanas* and practices in the name of Śakti Cult, known in the Sikh Scriptures as Sākat Mat, have already estranged them from the mainstream of Sikhism in the west and east. Yogī Bhajan's false postures to pose and act as the self-styled Pope of the Sikhs in the Western Hemisphere (Supreme Authority over the Sikhs of the west as he calls himself) have further alienated this cult, ideologically and spiritually from the fundamental structure of the Sikh Community all over the world.

Charlotte Vaudeville in her book on Kabīr writes: "Devī-worship in general, even when not associated with specifically Tāntric Yoga practices, is often currently referred to as Sākta type religion (Śāktism in modern parlance) and all Devī-worshippers are designated Sāktas." She further states that although Kabīr uses some Tāntric vocabulary, he emphatically rejected their practices, and mocked their vain pretensions to have conquered death, and to have obtained bodily immortality."<sup>6</sup> This is exactly the position of *Ādi Gurū Granth* and Sikhism. In the *Ādi Gurū Granth* Kabīr says:

*Kabir sādḥū kī saṅgaṭī rahau*

*jau kī bhūṣī khāu.*

Kabir: I shall ever like to live

In the companionship of true saints

At whose feet I shall be content to eat chaff.

Come what may, under no circumstances shall I

Ever associate myself with Tāntric Sāktas.

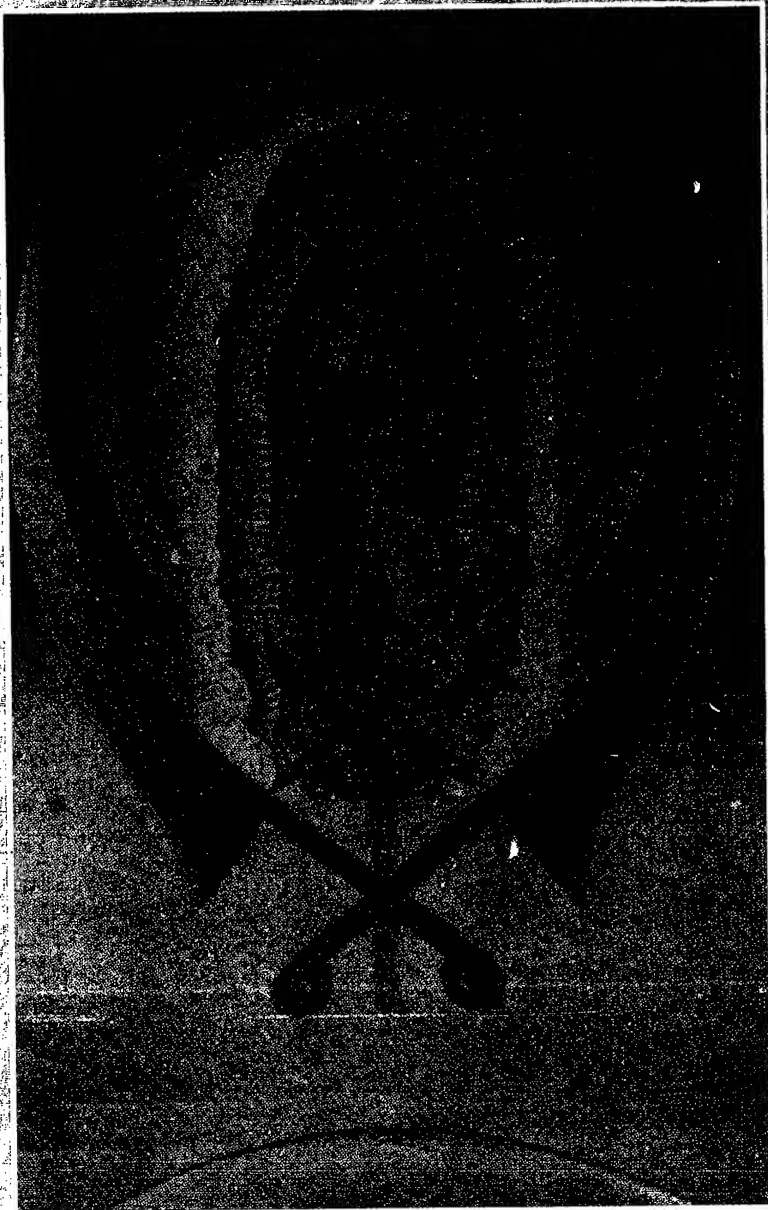
*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Kabīr, *Sloka*. 99, p.1369.

In the *Ādi Gurū Granth* the Tāntric Sāktas (White, Red or Black) are bracketed with cheats, thieves, liars, hypocrites, wicked and deceptive people, who always put on holy garb, pose as religious saviours, move about pretending to be miracle mongers.



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Most of them survive by threatening those who refuse to believe in their fake mysticism and magic. In the evening prayers the Sikhs read everyday:

*rakhe rakhanhārī āpū ubārianū.  
gur kī pairī pāi kāj swārianū.*

In the company of true saints

Man can easily cross the ocean of existence.

The Tāntric Śāktas, the scandal mongers and wicked people

Are ultimately destroyed by the Divine power of God.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Arjan, *Rehirās*

*Rāga Gūjarī*, p. 517.

The secret of Yogī Bhajan's success lies in his ability of successfully bribing the Sikh leaders. In every century such cults have flourished and tried to fool the people and pose as saviours. They all started as ingroups but ended miserably as disowned and discredited outgroups. With money power and cheap propaganda he has tried to create an impression that his Tāntric Yoga is identical and even superior to Sikhism. But ignorant Indian Sikhs and his American and Canadian followers are bound to know the truth and revolt against the evils of this hodge-podge cult.<sup>7</sup>

The Śword and the Khaṇḍā (Two-edged Sword) of the Khālsā has nothing to do with Śaktī and Durgā of the Tāntric cults. It is the living symbol of the Eternal Spirit, the Supreme Being, the Almighty Slayer of evil and Protector of the virtuous. Gurū Gobīnd Sīngḥ calls this Sword, his *Pīr* (Gurū) and his Saviour, his Protector and source of Power and Wisdom.<sup>8</sup> All sacrilegious interpretations by Yogī Bhajan's 3HO cult show how far they have drifted away from Sikhism. It is equally painful that such sacrilegious distortions of Sikh symbols by a Tāntric Yogī are being ignored deliberately by our self-styled saviours of the Sikh *Pañth*.

## REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. *Degh O Tegh Fateh nusrat be-dirang*  
*Yaft az Nānak, Gurū Gobind Singh.*

The translation which I have given is by Sir Muḥammed Iqbāl. It is difficult to accept the translation given by Tejā Singh-Gaṇḍā Singh in their book *A Short History of the Sikhs*. There is also no historical truth in Dr Gaṇḍā Singh's suggestion in his book *Baṇḍā Bahādur* that Baṇḍā was the author of this couplet. We find it in *Dasam Granth*, *Sarb-Loh Granth*, and Saināpati's allusions in *Gur Sobhā*. We find it in the letters of Mātā Sāhib Devī. We also find it written in Gurū Gobind Singh's own hands in a document preserved with Sodhi families of Anāṇḍpur.

2. *Ādi Gurū Granth*, p. 360.
3. *Ādi Gurū Granth*, *Vār Sattā* and *Balwaṇḍ* p. 966.
4. *Dasam Granth*, "Epilogue to Kṛishṇa Avatār", p. 570.
5. Pūran Singh, *The Spirit Born People*, p. 94.
6. Charlotte Vaudeville, *Kabir*, p. 123.
7. Trilochan Singh and Anūrāg Singh *Sikhism and Tāntric Yoga: A Study of Yogī Bhajan's Tāntric Cult in the garb of Sikhism*. (Berkley, U.S.A.). The second revised and enlarged edition (423 pages) with photographs is in the press.
8. Gurū Gobind Singh, *Bachitar Nāṭak*, Chapter I.

## CHAPTER 14

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IRON BRACELET : KARĀ

The word *karā* is derived from the Sanskrit word *kaṭak*, which means a bracelet of gold, a ring serving a bridal bit. According to Sūkumār Sen's *Etymological Dictionary*, *karā* is described as a ring or wristlet, made of clay or lac, still worn in Bengāl by a bride at the time of marriage ceremony. *Karā* thus came to mean throughout North India, a ring worn on the wrist or on the ankles. Two things are clear about it. It is a feminine ornamental symbol of love, devotion and unbreakable ties. These bangles are worn by woman of all faiths, and when a Hindu woman becomes a widow, she either breaks her bangles, or puts them off as a sign of widowhood. Thus the bangle in Indian tradition was a symbol of being protected and loved by the Beloved who gave them.

We notice that out of the five fundamental ingredients of Sikh baptism, one came as an offering of the Holy Mother, and it was sugar-pellets. All other symbols represented the manly virtues of life. At the request of High Priest Rām Koer, the Holy Mother added her share, and her choice was sugar pellets; the sweetness, humility and grace of the Spirit of Motherhood. It is quite obvious that out of the five K's, which the Gurū gave to the Sikhs, four were to reflect Man's personality and character, and there was to be one emblem, the fifth one, symbolizing the participation of the Mother consciousness. This fifth emblem was chosen to be the Iron Bracelet. If women were to carry even such a thing as the Sword, and be manly and equal with men in society and the battlefield, men were to carry at least one symbol of the noblest virtue in



women, that is loyalty, devotion and unbreakable pledge of love. As the sword was to be of steel, this bracelet was also to be of steel, and both men and women were to wear it.

As the sword was to be wielded by the right hand, this bracelet was also to be worn on the right wrist. As sugar was poured into baptismal water to sweeten it and make the fiery and blazing sharpness of the Two-Edged Sword savoury and sweet nectar, so also the iron bracelet was worn by the same hand that wielded the sword, to balance the piercing sharpness of the sword with restraint, faith, tolerance and compassionate love, symbolized by the bracelet. The bracelet must guide the hand, which holds the sword, with a passion for justice and freedom. In other words, the sword of Gurū Gobīnd Singh can be correctly used only by the hand that wears understandingly the bracelet of Gurū Gobīnd Singh, a gift from the Holy Mother.

A ring or a bracelet has, all over the world, been used as symbol of moderation, self-control, equanimity and modesty. These are the virtues which balance gallantry, prowess, doughtiness, knightliness and manfulness. Without these restraining virtues of the bracelet, the sword could indulge in rashness, imprudence and indiscretion. Of all the things in the world, the use of the sword requires the noblest virtues of the heart, and these virtues are symbolized by the bracelet, which the Sikhs wear.

A ring or bracelet is generally considered to be the symbol of completeness and protection. St. Gregory says, "By a ring is designated the Omnipotence of Divine Power. For, when it keeps us from being seized by temptations, it encircles around and holds firm in wondrous ways, the snares of the ancient enemy."<sup>1</sup>

At the Ordination of the Archbishop in the Roman Catholic Church a ring is given to the Bishop. We are told that the ring is a symbol that the Bishop is wedded to the Church. The rite underlines the fact that he must be faithful to the responsibilities, he is undertaking. When one sees the Iron Bracelet round the

right wrist of any Sikh, man or woman, it indicates that he is wedded to the Sikh Church, and he carries with him the feeling of loyalty, in the sense of lasting commitments to the ideals of Gurū Nānak-Gurū Gobind Singh.

A Sikh is the Bride of God in the realm of mysticism. He is also a warrior Knight of God, fighting against oppression in the arena of human society and civilization. A Sikh is repeatedly told in the Scriptures, "*ṭhākuriṁ ekū sabāi nārī*. God is the one Person, all human beings, men and women are his brides."<sup>2</sup> Sirdār Kapūr Singh in his scholarly work, *Pārāśarapraśna: Baisākhī of Gurū Gobind Singh*, gives the following four meanings of the bracelet:

(1) "The iron bangle symbolizes that a Sikh must ever remain mindful of his double role of a spiritual aspirant and a useful citizen. No default on one side or the other of the discipline is permissible.

(2) "A circle, a *chakra*, is a perfect figure, all inclusive in its circumference and without a beginning, without an end in its structure. So a Sikh must aim to be with the whole creation, as the objective of his compassion and activities.

(3) "Since it is par-excellence, symbolic of the *dharma*, the Supreme Law, it is symbolic of faith, without which religious life is inconceivable. A Sikh must lead a life guided and supported by faith in God.

(4) "Lastly, iron, the world over, is commonly taboo in evil spirits and prevents spells from taking effect. A Sikh remains well protected against the inharmonious influences on his way of life by virtue of holding fast to God and the Dharma."<sup>3</sup>

While the first three suggestions of the learned scholar, Sirdār Kapūr Singh, are profoundly erudite and meaningful, I find it difficult to accept the fourth argument for warding off evil spirits with iron bracelet. The whole ethics of Sikh faith as the translations of *Rehitrāmās* reveal, is based on utter disbelief and disregard of the superstition of evil spirits hounding man, and the necessity of talisman for it. It is superstition of the Romans and the Hindus,

which is not accepted even remotely by Sikh history, tradition and theosophy. Taking this line of thought, many people explain away by saying that it is a protection against lightning. Commenting on this suggestion, Prof. Pūran Singh says, "I heard a stupid Sikh preacher the other day who was convincing a mass gathering of the Sikhs that the iron ring of the Gurū, worn on the wrist, is a protection against lightning. He said as large building are made safe against lightning by a rod of iron, so the Gurū has saved man from the stroke of lightning. He was hopelessly flinging his arms up and down together some straw of reason to prove the rationale of the iron ring, the Gurū gave as a gift, and His blessings. Fie on our manners that we argue over and over about it. He loved me. He made me His own. The sword is the mind where the Gurū lives. The iron ring is the sign of His remembrance. We have to wear the ring which is his gift, and we are the prisoners of His infinite Love. These are the fetters of love, the price of our freedom. Each Sikh wear hair and the beard of Gurū Gobīnd Singh. We are moulded in His image. Those who do not have that personal love for the Gurū are still out of His court. But our freedom is in Him and not anywhere without Him. Do not talk to us in that strain of the Sikh preacher. They are the signs of our being 'wedded women'. They are the wedding gifts from the Bridegroom. He gave all those to us, and they are sacred."<sup>4</sup> Dharam Anant Singh suggests that the "iron bangle (Kaṛā) appears to be the emblem of Justice". Justice in the sense, used by Plato in his writings.<sup>5</sup>

## REFERENCES AND NOTES

- (1) St. Gregory, *Morals in the Book of Job*, vol. iii, p. 575.
- (2) (i) *Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Nānak, *Rāgā Rāmkaḷī*, p.933  
(ii) *Ibid.*, p.983.  
(iii) *Ibid.*, p.527.
- (3) Kapūr Singh, *Pārāśara-praśna: The Baisākhī of Gurū Gobīnd Singh*, pp. 142-43.
- (4) Pūran Singh, *The Spirit Born People*, pp. 139-40.
- (5) Dharam Anant Singh, *Plato and the True Enlightener of Soul*, p. 169.

## CHAPTER 15

### THE SIKH DRAWER: *KACHH* SYMBOL OF CONTINENCE AND RESTRAINT

After wearing the drawer: *kachh*  
As symbol of continence and tolerance,  
The *Khālsā* held aloft in his hand, the sword.

Bhāi Gurdās II.

The fifth symbol is short linen trouser, reaching the knees, but not covering them. And this is the emblem of Modesty and Temperance.

Dharam Anant Singh, *Plato and the True Enlightener of Soul.*

In the east holymen have generally been very indifferent to their body and clothes. They have taken extreme view about restraint of passions, and they have displayed their ascetic temper either by going absolutely naked, or by just covering their genitals by a piece of cloth three inches wide and half a yard long called *laṅgoṭī*. This, in the opinion of Gurū Gobīnd Singh, was cynical to the extreme and even unsocial, if not anti-social. The hip dress worn by holymen and the Brāhmins was *dhotī*. Though more elegant than *laṅgoṭī*, it was utterly useless for a man who is to wear the sword and take part in active life. It is all right for a Brāhmin whose work is to preach and live on alms and charity. Even in *dhotī* wearing areas of India very few doctors or engineers or sportsmen can afford to wear *dhotī* and do their normal duties. It has been patronized for clerical jobs and a large section of politicians.

The *kachh* covers the genitals and the thighs from the hips to the knees. It very much resembles in principle the *Khāḱī* shorts (half pants) popular during war. A Sikh with his underwear

(kachh) can actively go to the service in the temple. The dhotī of the Brāhmiṇs is associated with innumerable Hindu rites and ceremonies. Strict injunctions to wear the kachh and reject dhotī or laṅgoṭī, is a complete repudiation of Brāhmaṇical rites and ascetic practices:

*paṛī pustak saṁdhiā bādām.*

*sil pūjasi bagul samādhām.*

After reciting the scriptures,

And saying the evening prayers,

The Brāhmiṇ wrangles in polemics.

Like the crane he sits before a stone god

In sham meditation and worship.

False is his speech,

Which can make iron of lies

To appear to be the gold of truth.

Thrice he repeats the sacred verses of *gāyatrī*;

Around his neck he wears a rosary,

And puts a frontal mark on his forehead.

He keeps two *dhoties* (loin cloths)

And a piece of cloth to cover his head.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Nānak, Āsā dī Vār, 14:2, p. 470.*

Although dhotī is now popular dress in Bengāl, and has been made respectable because rich people wear it at home and even in offices, it is still the most essential dress for Brāhmaṇical rites and ceremonies.

The underwear (drawer: kachh) of the Sikhs itself suggests that a Sikh must play the role of a saint and soldier in social and political life. He is a religious man, ready to perform all secular duties. Holiness for him is to be expressed in action and restraint, more in smart and sober dress than in garments depicting cynical other-worldliness. The turban and the drawer represent together what Albert Schweizer would call a life-affirming view in contrast to the life-denying outlook of a clean-shaven head and laṅgoṭī or dhotī of ascetics and Hindu priests. The drawer is, therefore, a

dress for the lower part of the body, which is symbol of smartness, preparedness for action and life-affirming restraint.

To sum up, Gurū Gobind Singh's perennial message to the ordained Khālsā is: "Whenever there are five Sikhs assembled who abide by the Gurū's teachings, know that I am in their midst. Let him who wishes to see me go to an assembly of the Sikhs and approach them with faith and reverence, he will surely see me amongst them.<sup>1</sup> Henceforth the Gurū shall be the Khālsā and the Khālsā shall be the Gurū. I have infused my Spirit, heart and body into the *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib* and the Khālsā. O Khālsā, remember the true Name..... I have attached you to the skirt of the Immortal God and entrusted you to Him—ever remain under His protection and trust none besides Him. O Khālsā, my Beloved, let him who desires to see me look into the *Gurū Granth*, obey the *Gurū Granth*, it is the Gurū's visible body; let him who longs to meet me search diligently in its hymn..... Read the *Gurū Granth*, or listen to it, so shall your heart receive consolation in the Gurū's Heaven."<sup>2</sup>

♫

### GURŪ GOBĪND SINGH'S Khālsā STANDS FOR THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL UNITY OF MANKIND

Even though Gurū Gobind Singh created the Khālsā in the Indian setting of Hinduism and Islām, what the Sikhs call a third unique cultural nationality, *Teesrā Nyārā Khālsā Panth*<sup>3</sup>, his main aim was to create a morally and spiritually ideal man and society which would bridge the wide gaps between faiths like Hinduism and Islām, Judaism and Christianity. In the *Akāl Ustatī* Gurū Gobind Singh gives his conception of God and humanity in which the whole of mankind is seen aspiring to reach the blessed presence of God:

*farā ke farāngī mānai*  
*Qandharī kuresī jānai.*  
The Arabs of Arabiā,

The French of France,  
The Kureshīs of Qaṇdhār,  
Meditate on Thee.

*Dasam Granth*, Gurū Gobind Singh, *Akāl Ustatī*, 254, p. 36.

Naming all people from Manchūrīā to Rome and England, Gurū Gobind Singh points out that human beings all over the world worship the same God, and the differences in their forms of worship are mainly due to different cultural environments. Gurū Gobind Singh aimed at uniting all mankind in enlightened ethical and spiritual righteousness. He says:

*dehurā masīt soī puṛā au nīwāj oī*  
*mānas sabai ek pai anek ko bharmāu hai.*

The Hindus and the Muslims are all one,  
Have each the habits of different environments,  
All men have the same eyes, the same body;  
The same form, compounded  
Of the same four elements:  
Earth, air, fire and water.

The *Abeḥh* (Formless) of the Hindus  
And the *Allāh* of Muslims are the same.  
The *Kor'ān* and the *Purāṇas* praise the same Lord.  
They are all one in Spirit.  
The One Lord made them all.

*Dasam Granth*, Gurū Gobind Singh, *Akāl Ustatī*, 86, p.19.

Whether the conflict is between Hindus and Muslims, as between India and Pakistan, or between Muslims and Jews in the Middle-East, or between Muslims and Christians in Lebanon, or between black and white in South Africa, the problem is the same. The problem cannot be solved in the economic ideological setting by the Communist or Capitalist powers. It can be solved only by enlightened religious and cultural forces which can be a bridge between the warring groups. Neither the Communists nor the Capitalists command any respect in the saner section of world

community in the east and west. If the human world and the present civilization is not to be ruined materially and spiritually, we have to seriously consider the problems of equality, social justice and genuine political freedom, not only for our own community, country and nation, but for all suffering humanity. No section of mankind should become a threat to any other through superior economic or physical power.

Gurū Gobiṇḍ Siṅgh believed that moral and spiritual values must transform man from within before the satanic forces of power politics changes him from outside. Social and political forces have meaning and significance if they respect human freedom and allow intellectual and spiritual freedoms to flower uncensored and unhindered. A number of communities have lived in India for centuries. They have passively tolerated one another without properly understanding one another. They have never opened healthy dialogue between one another for which Sikhism has always strived. They have never tried to own or assimilate the best that is in others.

The worst feature of the present day situation is that extremely selfish and corrupt politicians are accepted and honoured as champions of religion and social culture. These champions of darkness and dissension first destroyed the cultural and spiritual bonds between the Hindus and Muslims resulting in the partition of India in 1947, and now they are ruthlessly destroying the spiritual and cultural bonds between the Hindus and Sikhs.

The social philosophy of Gurū Gobiṇḍ Siṅgh impels us to study all religions in their true spirit and show reverence for them, even if we have some basic doctrinal differences with them. The search of Truth and the service of humanity through different paths and different means should bring mankind and religions closer to one another and weld them into one-world-family, devoted to truth and higher spiritual values. Gurū Gobiṇḍ Siṅgh's life and message, his ideals and social philosophy, disciplined in the mind and soul of the Khālsā, repeatedly reminds us that man



is of one human race and the search for the Light and love of God is universal quest in which all paths lead towards one and the same goal, and all people march as brothers at heart and in spirit and not as enemies or rivals.”<sup>4</sup>

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

- (1) *Prem Sumārag*.
- (2) Duncan Greenlees, *The Gospel of the Gurū Granth Sāhib*, p. 213.
- (3) (i) *eh tīsar mazhab Khālsā upjito pārdhānā*.  
(ii) *ion tīsar Panth rachāian vaḍ sūr gahelā*.  
Bhāi Gurdās II, *Vār*. 41, *Paurī*. 16.
- (4) Trilochan Singh, *Social Philosophy of Gurū Gobind Singh*: Paper read at Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simlā, and published by the Institute in *Sikhism and Indian Society* 1967, p. 204.

## CHAPTER-16

# SIKH WORSHIP AND PRAYER

### SIKH TEMPLES IN HISTORY

The word 'Temple' derived from the Latin word '*Templum*' meant a rectangular place marked out by the augur, for the purpose of observation in primitive cultures. Then the 'temple' became a place marked off as sacred to gods and goddesses. It was not a place of worship and prayer, but a house of gods in which the priests alone were entitled to enter.

During the early Vedic period there is no record of temples. The Buddhists had their *Chaitya* halls; religious places where some relics were preserved, and *Vihāras*; the halls where monks assembled with cells at sides for sleeping. The Hindu temples were cubical cells connected with larger assembly halls, but the cubical cells in which the god or goddesses are installed could be entered by none except the priests. It is so even to this day.

The Muslim place of worship, the mosques, are called *Masjid* in Arabic, the literal meaning of which is "Place of Prostration." Prayer and worship in the Masjid is strictly confined to the recitation of *Kor'ān*, facing Meccā. *Mihrāb* is a niche in the wall of the mosque which indicates the *qibla* or the direction of the prayer.

In the beginning the house or the hall or even the open air assembly where Gurū Nānak addressed the congregation became sacred and holy place. The prophet was identified with the spiritual perfection of the Deity, and he himself declared that his mind, body and soul were the Word of God in human flesh. Reciting, singing, contemplating and interpreting the hymns of

the Sikh Gurūs formed the core of religious services. The assembly was called *Sādh Saṅgat*, or the assembly of saints and holymen. The earlier Sikh temples where the Gurū addressed the congregation, were known as *Dharamsālas* (the House of Faith), or the *Gurūdwarā* the door or the Shrine of the Gurū, the True Enlightener of the Soul. The word *dvār*, literally meant Door or Path or the Way.

The temples where the Sikhs congregated without the physical presence of the Gurū were called *Saṅgat*, which in moral and spiritual connotation is the same as the Buddhist *Saṅgha*. All historical Shrines outside Puñjāb are even now known as Saṅgats. The Shrines founded to commemorate the visits of Gurū Nānak in various places are known as *Barī Saṅgat* (Greater Congregation) and those founded by Gurū Tegh Bahādur are known as *Chhotī Saṅgat* (Lesser Congregation). We find such Saṅgats in Lucknow, Benāras, Allāhābād, Calcuttā and other places. The Saṅgat of Dāccā is known as *Saṅgat Ṭollā*. The word *ṭoll* in Bengālī means an *āśram* for Sanskrit studies. The Saṅgat Ṭollā became a Shrine for Sikh prayer, worship and missionary work.

Gurū Arjan built the famous Shrine of Amritsar, which he named *Harimaṇdir*: the Temple of God. It is now known as the Golden Temple. Only some historical Shrines built after that, are known as Harimaṇdir, but the common Sikh temple is not known as Harimaṇdir. After the death of Gurū Gobind Singh the Holy *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib* became the living embodiment of the Eternal Spirit of the Ten Gurūs. Since then all Sikh temples are known as Gurdwārās. ♦

### ĀDI GURŪ GRANTH THE PRESIDING DEITY IN THE TEMPLES

When Gurū Nānak addressed the congregations in the Dharamsālas, he spoke from a raised platform called the *Takhat* in Persian and *Mañjī* in Puñjābī. The word Mañjī is derived from the Sanskrit word *Mañch* which means a raised stage, a couch, or a bed. When Gurū Nānak installed Gurū Aṅgad as his successor,

he asked him to live in his home town Khaḍūr, and also informed him that he had already got a Mañjī (Pontific Throne) especially prepared for him which he would find in the custody of one of his devoted lady disciples, named Mātā Vīrāi. She had been instructed to give it only to his legitimate successor.<sup>1</sup> This became the pontific throne for Gurū Aṅgad's *durbar*.

Bhāi Gurdās was the nephew of the third Gurū and the Co-compiler of *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib*. His writings were considered canonized scriptures, and blessed by Gurū Arjan as the Key to *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. He ordered that the Sikhs should give them the same place of respect in daily services and hymn singing as given to the Hymns of *Gurū Granth*.<sup>2</sup> He gives us a clear picture of how the Sikh Temple grew independently of the Hindu *Maṇḍirs* and Muslim *Masjids*. Bhāi Gurdās says, "At Kartārpur, Gurū Nānak established the Dharamsāla (Sikh Temple of Gurū Nānak's Faith). The congregation or the assembly of holy men who met in prayer and worship was visible representation of *Sach Khaṇḍ* (Heaven, or the Abode of Truth)."<sup>3</sup> These temples of Gurū Nānak's Faith "are like the *Mānasarovar* (the heavenly lake, the source of Gaṅgā), where the swans of heaven, the seekers of truth, come for the pearls of wisdom."<sup>4</sup> "If you wish to see Sikhism in practice, go and see it in the Sādh Saṅgat (Congregation of holy men) which is the real Gurdwārā (the Shrine of the Gurū)."<sup>5</sup> By the time of Gurū Arjan Sikh Saṅgats had spread all over India, and Gurū Arjan had a fairly firm control over all of them. Bhāi Gurdās says, "There are millions of Sikhs Saints and Seers (*gurmukh sādhs asāṅkhs*), and there are Dharamsālas finding a place of prestige in innumerable places: *Dharamsāl thāi thāi suhāi*."<sup>6</sup>

Gurū Nānak consciously established the pontific throne and the method of installing the successor with symbolic offer of five coins and cocoanut, which was the same as adopted by Kings in India, when they installed a successor.

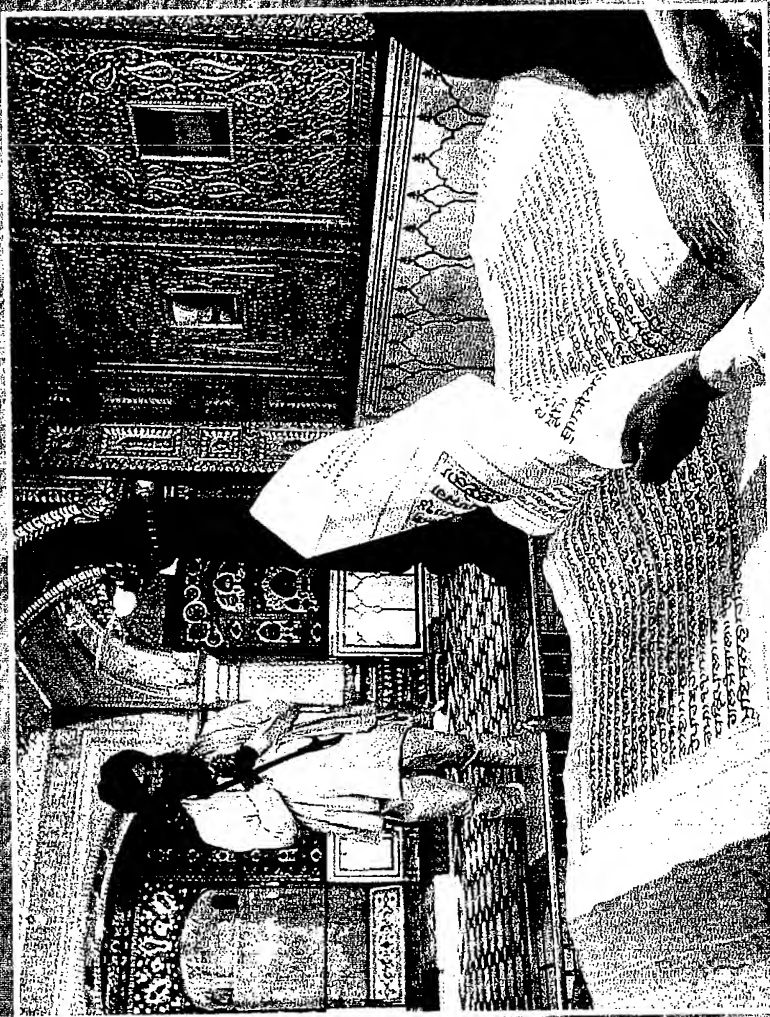
The professional musician Balwaṇḍ and his cousin Sattā were the Bards of Gurū Nānak. When Gurū Nānak installed Gurū

Aṅgad as his successor and asked him to stay at Khaḍūr, he also asked Balwaṇḍ to accompany Gurū Aṅgad and perform *Kīrtan* in his durbār.<sup>7</sup>

In their *Vār*; a bardic composition, Balwaṇḍ and Sattā, who were eye-witnesses to the installation of the first four successors of Gurū Nānak on the pontific throne, tells us that Gurū Nānak and his successors were addressed as *Sachā Pātsāh*: True King of kings. He say, "*tudū dīṭhai sache pātsāh malū janam janam kī kaṭiai*: On seeing You, O King of kings, the stain of evils of many past lives is removed."<sup>8</sup> He also says that Gurū Nānak established his pontific throne of his spiritual sovereignty (*Nānak rāj chalāyā*), and around the throne, he built a fortress of Truth and Divine Power. He placed the umbrella of sovereignty on the head of Gurū Aṅgad, and handed him over the Sword of Wisdom: *giān-kharag*. Thus Gurū Aṅgad has occupied the throne (*Takhat*) of Gurū Nānak (*mal takhat baiṭhā*) and over his head flutters the umbrella of the Perfect One: *Chhattar Nirānjanī*.<sup>9</sup>

The *Bhaṭṭs* whose compositions (123 verses) are found in the *Ādi Gurū Granth*, were great Sanskrit scholars. Their leaders Bhaṭṭ Poet Bhikhā writes:

*rehio saṁt hau ṭolī sādḥ bahutere dīṭhe.*  
*sannyāsī tapasāḥ mukhū e paṇḍit mīṭhe.*  
 In search of a truly enlightened saint,  
 I vainly wandered about.  
 Recluses I encountered many,  
 Sweet-tongued no doubt were they,  
 None of them gave me solace of spiritual light.  
 I heard them talk a lot of high ideals,  
 But their practice was most disappointing.  
 Discarding the Name of God,  
 They indulged in worldly ways,  
 O what may I say of them?  
 By the Grace of God  
 I have found Gurū Amar Dās.



Manuscript of the Koran, from the library of the Sultan of Egypt



By Thy will I shall ever abide, O Gurū.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Bhaṭṭ Bhikhā, *Sawāīye*, pp. 1395-96.

Bhaṭṭ Poet Salh says, "O thou, son of Tejhbhān, monarch of an honourable lineage; the blessings of Gurū Nānak, King of kings, is on thee."<sup>10</sup> Bhaṭṭ Poet Jālap adds, "Gurū Amar Dās truly is the Divine Father of the world. Blessed is the head, says Jālap, which bows before the Gurū."<sup>11</sup> Bhaṭṭ Poet Mathurā says, "When Gurū Rām Dās left for the heavenly abode, he left his throne and umbrella of sovereignty over the world to Gurū Arjan: *chhattar singhāsani prithmī, Guru Arjan kau de āyio*."<sup>12</sup> Sattā and Balwari concludes their *Vār* saying, "On the *takhat* (pontific throne) sat Gurū Arjan (*takhat baithā Arjan Gurū*), and on his son was shining the canopy of the true Gurū's glory. From the east (rising of the sun) to the west (setting of the sun) His Light spreads all over the world round him."<sup>13</sup>

It is a well-known fact of history that although the Sikh Gurūs maintained strictly a sober atmosphere of holiness and piety, they lived in full royal splendour and dignity, having a canopy or umbrella of sovereignty over their head. The devotees used to wave *chowrie* over their head.

The Chowrie is not a fly-whisk as some Christian missionaries call them. To call it a fly-whisk is something like calling the Chalice used in Holy communion in the Churches a wine glass or a beer mug. It has been from time immemorial used for honouring Kings and Temple Deities, and is a symbol of royalty and supremacy.

The same royal splendour, dignity and peace is maintained in the sanctum sanctorum of the Sikh Temples where one sees the *Ādi Gurū Granth* as the Embodiment of the eternal living Spirit of Ten Gurūs. It is placed on a raised platform, or at least a small miniature throne called *Mañjī Sāhib*. Over it one can see the canopy, symbolizing the Sovereignty of the *Ādi Gurū Granth* among human beings and the sacred scriptures. It is never to be treated as an ordinary secular book. When the service is in



progress, a devotee is always seen waving a Chowrie over it as a mark of reverence and the highest position given to the Holy Book. Everyone should sit facing the *Ādi Gurū Granth*, and no one is allowed to sit with his back towards it consciously or unconsciously. Everyone who enters the temple must do so with his head covered and his feet without shoes and socks.

#### ADORATION: *VANDANĀ* OF ĀDI GURŪ GRANTH

Adoration is derived from the word "Adoro" which means "I pray to". A temple hall is like any other hall, but the moment we know that it is a place of worship and prayer, we have entirely a different attitude towards it. It is this attitude of reverence which makes us consider a holy place to be more sacred than any other place or building. No one is without a sense of awe, a need to adore, an urge to worship. The question only is what to adore, or more specifically what object only is worthy of our supreme worship.

Since time immemorial whoever has entered a temple, be he Jew, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, or Sikh, everyone knelt down in reverence in various traditional ways. Solomon, on the dedication to the Temple he had built, knelt down on his knees. The *Talmud* speaks of bending the knees with face touching the ground. Ezra fell upon his knees and spread out his hands unto the Lord. Daniel knelt down on his knees and prayed. Muslim start their prayer standing and have different postures for showing reverence and submission to God, till in the end, the worshipper drops on his knees and puts his nose and head on the ground.

Before a Sikh enters the temple, he performs the ablution of washing his hands and feet, and when the face also is washed it is called *pañj-īśnānā* (five ablutions). This is exactly what all Muslims do. The Sikh then touches the door-way of the temple and anoints his forehead with the symbolic dust of those who have already come for prayer. After the purity of the ablutions, he entertains humility in his heart, feeling that he should leave all his evil

thoughts outside the door of the temple. He generally takes with him some money, even a penny, few flowers, or sacramental food (*Kaṛāh prāsād*) or fruit or sweets. Everything can be offered except meat. In Indian dietary there are thirty-six types of food which are considered ambrosial (*Chhatī amrit*)<sup>14</sup>, but meat is not included in them. There can be no animal sacrifice within the precincts of the Sikh temple.

As soon as one enters a Sikh temple he sees *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib* reverently wrapped in colourful cloth like the most sacred object of veneration. It is placed on the altar, which is symbolically the throne of the Gurū. Over it one sees a canopy symbolic of the sovereignty of the *Ādi Gurū Granth*. A person who can read the *Ādi Gurū Granth*, or the Keeper of the Temple (*Granthī*), serves as the Reader of the Holy Book. He waves a Chowrie over the *Ādi Gurū Granth* when he is not reading it and when prayers and hymn-singing (*Kīrtan*) are going on.

The Sikh devotee reverentially stands before the Holy Book; the Word of God, with folded hands (*doe kar joṛ*). He then places his humble offering on the altar carpet, which is to be used by the Management for charitable purposes only. The altar-front of the *Ādi Gurū Granth* is called the *Hazūri* of the Gurū: the Presence Divine. He then falls on both his knees, folds both his hands in humble obeisance and self-dedication and then touches the altar-front of *Ādi Gurū Granth* with his forehead. Some few prostrate themselves before the *Ādi Gurū Granth* in the posture called *ḍaṇḍāvat* (*ḍaṇḍaut*). The kneeling with folded hands and then sitting in prayerful mood of adoration is called *Vaṇḍanā* (Punjabī: *baṇḍanā*). There is a command of the Gurū to offer prayer (*Vaṇḍanā*) with folded hands, and prostrate oneself in utter humility before the Gurū. Every night the Sikhs recite the following lines in their Bed-time Prayer, *Sohilā Ārtī*:

*karī sādḥū anjuli punū vaḍā he.*

*karī ḍaṇḍaut punū vaḍā hē.*

Make the adoration of *Anjuli*  
 With supplicating hands of Enlightened Saints.  
 It is an act of great piety.  
 Make prostration in the from of *Daṇḍavat*  
 It is a devout act of merit and grace.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Rām Dās, *Rāga Gaurī Pūrbi*, p. 171.

*Anjuli* is a reverential posture of prayer and worship in which both the palms of the hands are placed side by side, slightly hollowed, humbly supplicating God for His gifts and grace. The hands are then raised to the forehead; a mark of thanksgiving. It is a reverential salutation common to saintly people. *Daṇḍavat* (Punjābī. *ḍaṇḍaut*) is the same as Persian *Sijdah*, common among devout Muslims. It is prostrating the body in a straightline with the forehead touching the ground. The normal and popular form of adoration is folding both hands with the palms touching each other:

*doi kar joṛī māgu ikū dānū*  
*Sāhibī tuṭhai pāvā.*  
 With hands folded in supplication,  
 I beg for one gift from God;  
 If the Lord is gracious, I will get it.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Arjan, *Rāga Sūhī*, p. 749.

As a modern writer on psychology states, "The mind goes beyond the body only by the first co-ordinating the latter with itself, whether by force or by persuasion. Ritual kneeling and prostration have a symbolic value and also produce a disposition of the body, favourable to internal disposition. Kneeling, prostration, the stillness of the body in prayer, the choice of place, time for prayer, are most mechanical activities, but expression of an inner states of mind. It is a sign of sincere attention to approach God. They reflect humility, awe, submission and reverence."<sup>15</sup>

Awe and reverence are expressed through kneeling and

prostration. In the Sikh Scriptures awe and reverence are called *bhai-bhāvanī*. Awe, says Abraham Heschel, "is the sense of wonder and humility; inspired by the sublime or felt in the presence of mystery. Awe precedes faith; it is at the root of faith. We must grow in awe to be worthy of faith."<sup>16</sup> "It is the beginning and gateway of faith, the first precept of all, and upon it the whole world is established. The loss of awe is a great block to insight. A return of reverence is the first pre-requisite for a revival of wisdom."<sup>17</sup>

When a Sikh kneels before *Ādi Gurū Granth*, he submits himself to the wisdom of the Sikh Gurūs and the perfectly illumined eminent Saints, whose hymns have been included in the *Ādi Gurū Granth*, namely Jaidev, Rāmānand, Kabīr, Sheikh Farīd, Ravīdās, Pīpā and Saiṇ. The Sikh temples have given place of pride to the Muslim Saint Sheikh Farīd's writings, which is denied to him in the Muslim mosques. There is no Hindu temple (Classical ones) where the hymns of Kabīr and Ravīdās are so worshipped and used in prayer and hymn singing as they are used in the Sikh temples. All the hymns in the *Ādi Gurū Granth* are so mingled with one another that if the names of the authors of the hymns were not there, it would have been difficult for even learned readers to distinguish between them. It is for this reason that over a hundred hymns of Gurū Nānak and hundreds by other medieval saints have found their way into *Kabīr Granthāvalī*. Even *Slokas* of Gurū Nānak in the Puñjābī dialect of *Saṇdal Bār* region of the Puñjāb are found in *Kabīr Granthāvalī*, and all authorities on Kabīr; Indian and western, who have neither cared to study Gurū Nānak's hymns nor the hymns of other medieval saints, have not been able to differentiate between the real hymns of Kabīr and those that have been picked up from other sources. Such uniformity of thinking and mystical experiences is really remarkable when we reflect on the fact that Jaidev, Nāmdev and Gurū Nānak were separated by a time gap of a century or two.

As Pūran Singh puts it, "*Gurū Granth* is the Scripture of all nations, for it is the lyric of Divine Love, and all people of this

earth subsist on such glowing lyrical prayer. *Gurū Granth* is but One Song, One Idea, One life. Immensity is the substance of the sublime. *Gurū Granth* is thus the deathless Song of the pilgrims on their way to the Golden Temple; the Song that the Father has written for the son. The path is unending because the path that goes to the Temple of Love is also unending. Every page of Creation is new life and inspiration; so is *Gurū Granth*. *Gurū Granth* has the supreme quality of lighting our soul with love and freeing us from all bondage of sense in the light of self-realization. At every step, eternity looks at us through each single star of a song."<sup>18</sup>

#### SIKH TEMPLES: GURDWARAS AS HOUSES OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY WELFARE

For centuries the Sikh temples have answered the needs of the people for organized prayer and religious instructions. Five to ten Sikhs make a congregation, "*ik Sikh, doi sādḥ saṅg, pañj parmeśvar*: An individual is a Sikh, two make a Congregation of Saints, and where there are five, there is the Spirit of God."<sup>19</sup> Besides being used as a Temple for prayer and worship, there always are few more Institutions attached to the temple. In some places these functions are ignored, and it is the Sikh society which suffers in these places. There always are some guest rooms for wayfarers, pilgrims and travellers. There generally is a Community Kitchen attached to the Temple where food is prepared for the congregations on the days, the congregations come for services and daily for the few guests lodging in the Temple guest house. There also are arrangements for educating and training the children for reading and understanding the scriptures. Wherever these functions are ignored, children and even adults grow up in ignorance and secular pursuits.

The Sikh temples are also places where the community leaders counsel together on their social and cultural problems, but this is done when religious services are over. Regular religious services

and prayers are never disturbed. Those crafty politicians or local elites who use the Sikh temples for faction fights, cheap political propaganda, or personal aggrandizement, commit unforgivable sacrilegious acts, which sober elements should always prevent at all cost. The Sikh temple should never be used as a political platform by any political party or cult groups. They can be used only for the socio-cultural problems of the Sikhs, which may arise from time to time locally or in other places. They can discuss the problems of World Sikh Community and maintain contacts and communications with one another. But under no circumstances should one political party capture the Sikh Temple, and use it more as a political club than as a House of Prayer. Atheists and Communists must be discreetly kept out, because their interest in participation is not religious or spiritual, but to extend the political hold of their party on the Sikh temple resources. But even atheists cannot be asked to leave if they are quietly attending the temple services to know or learn something. The money offered in the temple should be used only for educational and charitable purposes, through which the religious and cultural values of Sikhism can be enhanced. Thus the Sikh Temple like the Jewish Synagogues also serves as a Community Centre. Sikh Temples (Gurdwārās) have accompanied the Sikhs all over the world, and they have served as their Portable Homelands. They continue to give to the Sikh people the memories of the past, confidence and strength in the present and faith and hope in the future. They are the rallying points for all Sikhs, and have over the centuries proved to be citadels to safeguard Sikh religion and culture. Here, in these Sikh temples, the Sikhs get together and celebrate religious festivals. In the pre-British period the Sikh congregations assembled for prayer and worship every fortnight, but later on all religions in India followed the pattern of Sunday meetings of the Church. The Sikhs get together in the Temples in time of stress, and share their joys and sorrows by celebrating marriages and performing death ceremonies collectively. A Sikh

devotee goes to the temple to commune with God, and to identify himself with his people, to gain instructions and inspiration for his daily life and the pursuit of moral and spiritual virtues.

The highest form of worship is study and understanding the Sikh Scriptures. Formal studies are conducted only after the services. "What are our places of worship" said Philo, "but schools of prudence, courage, temperance and justice, of piety, holiness and virtue." Thus if a Sikh Temple fails to be a School of learning and training in Sikh morality and values, it fails in its fundamental task of disseminating the wisdom of the scriptures.

#### FUNCTIONARIES OF SIKH TEMPLES

The Sikh Temple (Gurdwārā) has two fold fundamental functions. It is the House of God and the Gurū, where the presiding Deity is the Word of God: the *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib*. It is also the living and visible Embodiment of Sādh Saṅgat: Congregation of Saints and Seekers of Truth. If it is not this, then, no matter what other functions are conducted in a ritualistic manner, it ceases to be a temple in spirit and action. The Sikh Temple was organized as an Institution by the Founders of Sikhism to continue their work as Moral and Spiritual Guides of the New Dispensation. It is a human society growing and developing in the framework of Sikh doctrines and culture.

The Chief functionaries of the Sikh Temple is a Granthī; One who performs the services connected with *Ādi Gurū Granth*. He has not priestly powers or ecclesiastical prerogatives. He is supposed to be a learned layman and not an ordained priest, like the ones found in Hindu temples and Christian churches. He has, by study and training, been prepared to give spiritual instructions and religious sermons to his congregation. He is first and foremost a teacher, and is called upon to fulfil a wide variety of functions. It has to be admitted that the Granthīs of the eighteenth and nineteenth century were of far higher order than those found

these days. It is not important for a Granthī to know music or Kīrtan which is a work done by *Rāgī Jathās* (Trained and professional musical groups, sometimes formed by laymen also). But it is essential that the minimum qualification of a Granthī should be that he should be able to interpret the scriptures, deliver sermons on Sikh history, and perform all ceremonies connected with Sikh way of life correctly and efficiently. It is unfortunate that the practice has highly secularized and commercialized the Sikh Temples, either to employ inefficient worthless Granthīs, who later on turn out to be sources of great trouble and dissension. I will give two examples of how great reverence the Granthīs of nineteenth century and early twentieth century commanded on men to the highest position. When the Head Granthī and *Jathedār Akāl Takhat* visited the court of Mahārājā Ranjit Singh on a special invitation, the Mahārājā stepped down from his Royal Chair, and not only prostrated before the *Ādi Gurū Granth*, but rubbed his forehead and beard on their feet as a mark of humblest submission and the greatest reverence.

In the first decade of this century there was a Sikh divine, who was the *Mahant-Granthī* of *Derā Ajāpāl Singh* named Bābā Narain Singh. He could recite the whole *Ādi Gurū Granth* from memory, and was great interpreter of the scriptures. He regularly performed the four complete readings of the *Ādi Gurū Granth* every month. He performed three complete readings of *Ādi Gurū Granth*, each in one sitting of about 30 hours. One such complete reading, all by himself, was performed in the palace of Mahārājā Hirā Singh of Nābhā. When the Mahārājā offered land and money as a mark of respect after the reading of the *Ādi Gurū Granth*, he refused to accept it. Bābā Narain Singh was taken in a palanquin (*Pālki*) to his residence, and the Mahārājā himself was the Pālki bearer, and was assisted by his Ministers. Such was the reverence shown to the Granthīs and divines who were then known as Mahants (Abbots). Bābā Narain Singh trained his son in Sikh history and scriptures, and the boy grew up to be the greatest



scholar, Bhāi Kāhan Singh Nābhā, author of Sikh Encyclopaedia: *Mahān Kōś*; a work indispensable for Sikh scholars of all times. He also assisted Macauliffe in his works, and as mark of gratitude, Macauliffe transferred the copyright of his works to him. Now a days even the illiterate Jathedārs who through the election processes become Presidents and Secretaries of S.G.P.C. treat the Granthīs of the Golden Temple as their secular employees, and the way they have been treated is the saddest commentary on the way, Sikh historical Shrines are managed. The respect and position of Granthīs has been denigrated to a position less than the Office Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries of S.G.P.C. The following is the list of eminent Head Granthīs of the Harimaṇḍir (Golden Temple) from the time of Gurū Arjan upto 1925 A.D.

Bhāi Buḍḍhā  
 Bhāi Gopāl Dās  
 Bhāi Manī Singh  
 Bhāi Chañchal Singh  
 Bhāi Ātmā Singh  
 Bhāi Gopāl Singh  
 Bhāi Dīwān Singh  
 Bhāi Hīrā Singh  
 Bhāi Partāp Singh.

No ecclesiastical authority is vested either in any Granthī beyond correctly interpreting the Sikh Scriptures and giving correct guidance. Nor can the Head of any religious Organization like S.G.P.C. or any cult organization which claims equality with such big organization can pose or pretend to be the Supreme Religious Authority over the Sikhs of any region. If anyone misleads the ignorant public (Sikhs and Non-Sikhs) by such false postures, as 3HO Chief of U.S.A. propagates himself as Supreme Religious Authority over Sikhs in the west, in spite of stern warning from the Jathedār Akāl Takhat, he is either an

unscrupulous maniac or a charlatan of the first order, who can afford to completely disregard Sikh doctrines and traditions, and mislead people who claim to be his followers or paid propagandists. National cultural decisions and matters concerning the whole community can be taken either by the *Pañj Piārās*, formed from the Jathedārs of Four Takhats and the Head Granthī of the Golden Temple, or if some external and internal pressures compel them not to act in the time of crisis, representatives of the Sikh Community can get together and Elect their own Religious and Political leaders, who inspire confidence of the Sikh masses all over the world, and follow their guidance and direction. This is what they had to do when the priests of the Golden Temple were controlled by the British government on the false assurance given to them that these Temples would be made their personal property by British law. It is unfortunate that once more the whole Religious Administration of historical Sikh Shrines is bogged down by dirty politics, and a whole generation of enlightened people is on the verge of violently revolting against them. Throughout history such postures of becoming Popes and gurūs of the Sikhs, or notorious corruption and distortions of the basic doctrines have not only miserably failed, but the general reaction of the Sikh Community has been bitter, and revolutionary changes have followed.

It is really unfortunate that politicians and society men, who are not only basically irreligious in the sense Sikhism is understood and practiced by serious persons, get together, form a Trust, buy a building as a Charitable Institution in the name of a few Trustees and run it as a Temple with public money, more as a cultural club than as a sacred place. Because the interest of the management is purely secular and mundane, the Sunday services which they organize are dull and noisy affairs, in which the formal prayers and lectures are delivered in a ritualistic manner. And then begins faction fight between various groups with no other interest except to gain local social importance. The younger

generation in these places feels helplessly disgusted with this state of affairs. They either turn away from religion, or they are convinced that they can never get any religious inspiration so long as the temples are managed in this manner. The only solution to this is that the Sikh Saṅgats who are a power by themselves, should not allow anyone who is not religious at heart and in his way of living, to get elected to the Management Committee. No one who is a drunk and visibly an apostate, should have any place in the administration so long as he does not take religion seriously. No one who belongs to a cult which has deviated from fundamental precepts of Sikhism, and is a *Rādhāsoāmī* or a *Tāntric* in the garb of *Khālāsā* should ever be permitted to work in the Management, or to have any say in the administration. Such people are *Khālāsā* or Sikhs only in appearance, and their appearance of piety and holiness is most deceptive.

#### CONCEPT OF SIKH WORSHIP

Evelyn Underhill in her excellent exposition of Worship rightly call it the response of the human creature to the Divine. For worship is an acknowledgement of Transcendence, that is to say, of a Reality independent of the worshipper which is always more or less coloured with mystery. In the very act of worship, his mind awakens to the splendour and beauty of God. In the very act of worship the devotee's mind turns from impurity to purity, from self-occupation to perception of God's Presence, from ignorance to knowledge and from darkness to light. "Man, the half animal and half spiritual creature, rises above his limitations on the wings of adoration and prayer, chastens his humanity and aspires to become a God in flesh. Man turns his back on the world and humbly stands before God, seeking His grace, blessings and power. He enters a world of supra-sensible Reality which lifts his mind to the creative world of super-consciousness. He seeks peace in suffering, joy in sorrow, and a single-minded contemplative

love in a world of strife and hatred."<sup>20</sup>

All the rites and rituals of the Sikh worship are channels of God's grace and power. They purify his spiritual sense and deepen his understanding of God's mystery. In the stillness of his body, mind and spirit blend into one awakened consciousness. In the Word Incarnate and Ineffable (*Aghādh bodh Śabad*), he hears the Music and Voice of God, and through the Revelation of higher life and awareness, he communes with God. The Word of God and the hymns of the Sikh Scriptures become a vehicle of revelation. His earthly life becomes meaningful.

For Gurū Nānak the whole earth and the universe around it, is the Temple of God (*dhartī dharamsāl hai*) in which Nature reveals the breath-taking mystery and grandeur of the universe. Nature (*Kudrat*, Arabic: *Qudrat*) as it is called is man's eternal companion in the life of the universe. It inspire praise for its beauty and kinship for the Power that controls it. It fills us with a sense of sublime, which in the words of Wordsworth dwells in the light of the setting sun and the round ocean and the living air, and the blue sky, and in the mind of man.

In the Golden Temple and all other Sikh temples of importance, a composition of Gurū Nānak called *Āsā dī Vār* (Heroic Prayer-Song) is sung before sunrise in the *Āsā* musical mode everyday. It contemplates Nature (*Qudrat*) and the Sublime (*Vismād*), while contemplating the mystery of God. Every word of this Divine Song awakens a sense of the Sublime, which makes the listener conscious of the inward greatness of the human soul. It opens the mystic doors of higher consciousness, and God is revealed not as a terrifying Power, but something extremely sublime, beautiful and lovable. The experience is not stupefaction of mind and senses, but an indescribable aesthetic revelation of Beauty and Reality in the vast universe around us. Every morning the following hymn is sung in the Harimaṇḍir (Golden Temple) Amritsar and in all major temples:

*Vismādū nād Vismādū Ved.*

*Vismādū jīa Vismādū bhed.*

Sublime are the melodies of Celestial Music,

Sublime are scriptures of divine Wisdom.

Sublime are living creatures,

Sublime are their differentiations.

Sublime are their beautiful forms,

Sublime are their manifold colours,

Sublime are animals wandering nude.

Sublime is air, sublime is water,

Sublime is fire that operates wondrously.

Sublime is the earth.

Sublime are the four sources of life:

The sweat, the seed, the egg, the womb.

Sublime are human desires and tastes,

For which human beings crave.

Sublime are the meetings of people in human relations,

Sublime are their partings and separations.

Sublime are the hungers of men.

Sublime are the gratifications of senses.

Sublime are the prayers and glorifications of God.

Sublime is His worship and adoration.

Sublime is man lost in wilderness.

Sublime is man treading on righteous path.

Sublime is the thought of God as near.

Sublime is believing God far away.

Sublime is visualizing Him here and now.

On seeing Your mystery and spectacle, Lord,

I am lost in the Ecstasy of the Sublime.

Through His consummate grace, says Nānak,

Comes the realization of the Sublime.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Nānak, Āsā dī Vār, Canto 3:1, pp. 463-64.*

Under the star lit night when a Sikh goes to bed, he again remembers His Creator in the wonderment and reflection; His Divine Presence in His vast creation. For him every planet, every star, every sweet-scented flower and tree and every life-giving wing

in the vast panorama of Nature are objects of continuous worship of the Eternal Being, and the music of the spheres which the mystics alone can hear, rings with enchanting music and melodies in the silence of his soul.

To the layman, the sun, the moon and the stars measure the drudgery of his work and labour in terms of time and the atmospheric climate. But over five centuries earlier Gurū Nānak saw in his mystic vision, a universe beyond universe and in each universe some earths, suns and moons and in each some civilization either like ours or far advanced. On each earth God sends his prophets to make His creatures conscious of His Wisdom and Presence. For Gurū Nānak the whole earth is the Temple of God (*dhartī dharamsāl hai*) and the sun, the moon, the stars, the winds and flowers join hands in corporate worship and adoration.

The over-simplified image of science is now fast changing and as J.B.S. Haldane puts it, "The universe is not only queerer than we suppose but queerer than we can suppose." Now the eminent Astronomer Dr Allan Sandage believes, "Galaxies are to astronomy what atoms are to physics." Ever since Einstein declared,  $\text{Energy} = \text{Mass} \times \text{the Speed of Light squared}$ , man saw not only the awesome power of the atom, but the researches in astrophysics have brought bewildering changes in man's concept of the cosmos. Dr Hubble through his remarkable studies in California mountain top observatory has revealed vast slowly rotating congregation of stars, resembling the Milky Way galaxy and proved that stupendous "island universes lay far beyond the bounds of our own great family of stars."

Every night before a Sikh goes to bed, he sits rapt in contemplation with folded hands and reflects through the Bed-time prayer on God's divine drama of creation. He feels that the whole universe joins him in worship and prayer before the Living and Loving Presence of God:

*gagan mai thālū ravī chāndū  
deepak bane tārikā maṇḍal janak motī.*

The whole firmament is the salver,  
 The sun and the moon are the worshipper's lamps  
 The galaxy of stars are precious pearls for offering;  
 Vast forests of sandalwood are the incense.  
 The cool breeze blows as royal *chowrie*  
 All the colourful flowers of the forests  
 Lie at Your Feet, Lord, as Nature's offerings.  
 What a wonderful worship with the lamp is this?  
 O Thou Destroyer of fear,  
 Thy vast Temple resounds with Unstruck Music.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Nānak, Sohilā Ārtī, Rāga Dhanāsri, p. 663.*

The purpose of the Sikh mode of worship is to develop the ethos of a spiritual culture, which is divine and at the same time intensely human. Sometimes orthodox leaders and saints form isolated eccentric groups, use some special modes of worship, peculiar in their external dress and formal manners to display their theatrical puritanism and bigotry. Their tendency is to build their own *āśrams* and *ḍerās*. In the Sikh temple these cults and *āśram* leaders are treated as commoners. So they build their own *āśrams* and their own temples to occupy a privileged position in those places. The Sikh holymen running these *āśrams* attract more attention, and even demand more offerings and adoration than are due to *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib*.

Corporate worship in the Sikh temples aim at the total orientation of man's life towards achieving enlightenment without submitting to the authority of any single individual. Such a corporate worship checks religious egotism, breaks down devotional barriers, obliges the spiritual highbrows to join in the worship of the simple ordinary people. Therefore, corporate and personal worship, though in practice, one commonly tends to take precedence of the other, should completely reinforce and check each other.

In all types of worship in higher religion, "the relation of God to the worshipper is one of forgiving and creative love; that of the

worshipper to God, one of dependence and dedication; and that of the worshipper to his fellow men, one of living witness to God's Will."<sup>21</sup>

"I am a sacrifice unto Thee O Beloved." These are the words, which occur in the Sikh Scriptures. Before the Deity we offer fruits, money, flowers—something into which we have put our life and blood; behind this visible offering there is an invisible offering of the Self." "Because", says Evelyn Underhill, "man is not a pure Spirit, he feels the need to translate this interior gift of himself into an outward rite which symbolizes it. For this reason he presents to God the homage of some material gifts."<sup>22</sup> But it must be borne in mind that, "If the mind is unclean, all else is unclean. A ceremonial washing cannot wash the mind."<sup>23</sup> Discipline and sincere congregation and personal worship always stirs up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of his duty to God and man.

The foremost of the Hellenistic philosopher, Philo of Alexandria, strongly advises against tampering with piety and customs. But he correctly asserts, "The man who obeys the written laws is not indeed worthy of praise, for he may be constrained thereto by fear of punishment. But he who holds fast to the unwritten laws, gives proof of a voluntary goodness and is worthy of our eulogy." (*De Just.* 2: 360). Then he adds, "If a man practices ablutions and purifications, but defiles his mind while he cleanses his body, or if through his wealth he founds a temple at a large outlay and expense, or if he offers hecatomb and sacrifices oxen without number, or adorns the shrine with rich ornaments, or gives endless timber and cunningly wrought work, more precious than silver or gold—let him none the more be called religious. For he has wandered far from the path of religion, mistaking ritual for holiness and attempting to bribe the Incorruptible, and to flatter Him, whom none can flatter. God welcomes genuine service and that is the service of a soul that offers the bare and simple sacrifice of truth, but from false service, the mere display of material wealth, he turns away." (*De Ebr.* 40)<sup>24</sup>. The *Ādi Gurū Granth* strongly



condemns ostentation in worship and hypocrisy in prayer. But people whose spiritual sense is good as dead, and whose inner vision is darkened by heedlessness and haughtiness, cannot understand the meaning and purpose of worship and prayer.

Some *Puṇḍits* and theologians of religion wish to identify loud prayers and worship with mere talkativeness. Some preachers and missionaries are good talking machines, and they build their piety and holiness by talking about it. Gurū Nānak repeatedly says that the Puṇḍits of religion talk and shout loudly (*uchā kūke*), but they are utterly devoid of divine knowledge and experiences. "Talkativeness is the throne of vainglory, on which it loves to show itself and make a display. Talkativeness is a sign of ignorance, a door to slander, a guide to jesting, a servant of falsehood, the ruin of compunction, a creator of despondency, a precursor of sleep, the dissipation of recollection, the abolition of watchfulness, the cooling of ardour, the darkening of prayer."<sup>25</sup>

### CONCEPT OF SIKH PRAYER

The word "prayer", says Aldous Huxley, "is applied to at least four distinct procedures: petition, intercession, adoration, contemplation. Petition is the asking of something for ourselves. Intercession is the asking of something for other people. Adoration is the use of intellect, feeling, will, imagination in making acts of devotion directed towards God in his personal aspect, or as incarnated in human form. Contemplation is the condition of alert passivity in which the soul lays itself open to the divine ground within and without the immanent and transcendent God head."<sup>26</sup> Prayer opens our mind to higher spiritual consciousness, the light of divine adoration warms our hearts and chastens our feelings. It lifts the veil of disbelief, refreshes our soul and removes our imperfections. No prayer is worth much, till it is a prayer of the heart. When we pray, we feel the Presence of the Beloved close to us. The devotee stands face to face before the Majestic Presence

of God and says, "Lift up my soul above the weary round of harassing thoughts to Thy Presence. Lift up my soul to the pure, bright, clear, serene, radiant atmosphere of Thy Presence, that there I may breathe freely, there repose in Thy Love, there be at rest from myself and from all things that weary me, and thence return, arrayed in Thy peace to do and bear what shall please Thee."<sup>27</sup>

"Man acknowledges God", says an eminent theologian, "as his Creator and Supreme Lord, and praises His power, manifested in creation and in providential care of the world. Man is grateful to God for the blessings conferred upon him and for assisting him in the time of trouble. It is this situation which is common to all human beings that prayer is common to all religions."

Prayer in Sikhism is a discipline for gradual ascent of the mind to the nearness of God. It is the basis and foundation of spiritual life. To enter upon prayer is to enter the Presence of the Lord for intimate converse with Him. Sincere prayer is always prayer with the heart. Prayer is our attachment to the utmost. Without God in sight, we are like the scattered rungs of a broken ladder. To pray is to become a ladder in which thought mounts to God to join the movement towards Him, which surges unnoticed throughout the entire universe. We do not step out of the world when we pray. We merely see the world in a different setting.

The religious man feels that he has a body and a heart. By heart, he means the inner Spirit and seat of knowledge; a deeper mystical perception. There are repeated injunctions in the Sikhs Scriptures to pray with the mind, heart, intellect and attentive consciousness: *mañ, chit, buddhī, surfī-ekāgartā*. In the *Ādi Gurū Granth* and other ancient scriptures, a heart which is illumined and blossoming with wisdom is compared with lotus. It is called *hirdai kamal*, but a heart that is depressed and gloomy is called *urdhamukhī*: drooping heart. We all seek the health and youth of the body, but with age and suffering it becomes an impossible task. It is, however, within our power to gain the full bloom of Spirit and

transcend all decay and desire of the body. Through sheer punctiliousness in observing rites and religious service, devotees tend to become oblivious of the Presence of God. Outward compliance and observance of externalities make the prayer and worship empty ritual. Thus the purpose of prayer is defeated. Prayer takes the mind out of the narrowness of self-interest, and enables us to see the world in the mirror of the holy. For when we betake ourselves to the extreme opposite of the ego, we can behold a situation from the aspect of God.

Temples and Churches are actually consecrated by sincere prayer of the devotees, by art, beauty and divine music, which is always associated with worship and by the presence of the Spirit of the Prophets and saints through the Word of God. The place where God is remembered through prayer and where devout souls assemble with the light of God, shining in each heart, becomes the House of God, commanding respect and reverence of all sensible human beings except perhaps the atheists and the materialists. True worship and prayer embraces man's emotion and Will in his entirety. All his hopes and desires, all his longings and aspirations converge on the adoration of truth. As already stated, all prayers and worships are threatened by two-fold danger of a lapse into puritanical fanaticism of over zealous people concentrating on the externals of religion, and careless formalism of insincere, lazy and worldly-minded devotees.

Prayer in Sikhism is self-consecration, and self-consecration is the only mystical act which not only inspires the devotee with the nearness of His Presence, but lifts the veils which darken our vision till the whole mystery and Presence of God is unveiled. Plato's prayer to the Greek divinities was: "Give me beauty in the inward soul, and may the outward and inward man be at one. May I reckon the wise to be wealthy, and may I have such a quantity of gold as a temperate man, and he alone can bear to carry."<sup>27</sup> The philosophic mind of the Greek were agreed in thinking that the best man can ask of God is a clean heart and a right spirit.

In some religions organized priesthood has become an important office. The more the ritual prayers, the more are the priestly function, which laymen cannot perform. But this is not so in Sikhism. Every prayer or function can be performed by knowledgeable laymen. Where the priests are qualified by ability and knowledge to instruct and direct the people, they were an influence on society making for good. But where the priests were the interested instruments of a superstitious and magical cult, they became a factor in the national life, hostile to spiritual progress. This is the reason why the Sikh Gurūs and Saints, who won the admiration of countless Hindus and Muslims, were generally strongly attacked by the Brāhmin priests and Muslim *Mullās* and *Qāzīs*. Priests as a parochial class are completely rejected in Sikhism, though the religious divines who conduct services regularly in the Sikh Temples are given a status of the priests so long as they work as Granthīs and Missionaries.

There is a question commonly asked by people: "Are all our prayers heard?" "Does God really respond to our prayers?" If so, how? It is repeatedly stated in the Sikh Scriptures that God never leaves even the tiniest spiritual effort, as tiny as a linseed, unrewarded: "*ikū tili nahī bhanai ghāle*. If we go one step towards Him, He comes a million steps towards us."<sup>28</sup> Such is His forgiving grace and benevolence. But God, out of Mercy and Supreme Wisdom, does not answer all the prayers of all human beings. The position taken is the same as that by the mystic Jalālū'dīn-Rūmī who says, "Many a prayer, if heard, would involve destruction, and it is divine wisdom not to answer it. God does not answer those prayers out of divine kindness, because He alone knows that the results would be disastrous."

It is not loud prayers which reach God soon, but the silent and sincere ones. God listens to the most stifled utterances of all living creatures. Gurū Gobind Singh says, "God's Light pervades the ant and the elephant, the roaring cry of an elephant reaches God a little later, but the silent stifled cry of an ant reaches Him much

earlier.”<sup>29</sup>

The next question which is asked by religious men is: “Which is the most appropriate time for prayer?” This question is discussed in many places and in all its aspects in the *Ādi Gurū Granth*. In our morning prayer *Japujī* two questions are posed. First, “how can we be truthful and know Truth? How shall we rend the veil of dark falsehood to see Truth?”<sup>30</sup> Secondly, “what then should we offer in prayer that we might see the kingdom of God? What shall we utter in prayer and worship, hearing which He bestows on us His love?”<sup>31</sup> The answer to the first question given by Gurū Nānak is, “Make the Will of God your own, which means completely eliminate your ego and self-will and make room in your heart for the Light of His Will. It is only in this attitude of humility and submission that God listens to the voice of our hearts. We are generally under constant temptations of low desires and we are repeatedly attacked by dryness of Spirit. Even in the worst trials we have to be sane and confident within our souls and submit ourselves to Him with joyous humility.”

The answer to the second question gives us two fundamental directions: First, the object of our prayer should be to win God’s love and grace. Secondly, we can win His love if we sincerely pray for it in the ambrosial hours of dawn (*amrit velā*). Saints and mystics have always preferred the early hours of dawn as the worldly-minded people are asleep, and the mind of the devotee is fresh after night’s rest and sleep. We have already stated that a Sikh has to recite at least five prayers, which have been discussed in Chapter 9. Prayer and solitude go hand in hand. Those who go to the forests or deserts to escape the noise of the maddening crowds in the city, do not necessarily find solitude. Their temptations and passions follow them to the darkest caves. True solitude is the silence and peace, one can afford to find for his contemplation. Sikh mystics have preferred early hours for meditation and quite often the middle of the night. This experience of the night prayer is shared by many Šūfī Saints. “Night prayer”, says Rūmī, “though

perhaps worthless in the eyes of the common people is like a radiant candle in God's eyes."<sup>32</sup> Many hymns of the *Ādi Gurū Granth* are in those *Rāgas* which can be sung only at night, namely *Jayjayvaṇtī*, *Kalyāṇ*, *Kāṇṛā*, *Bihāgarā*, *Mālīgaurā*, *Basaṇt* and *Mārū*. *Bihāgarā* is named after a bird known in Sanskrit as *Vihāngarā*, which sings in the middle of the night. "Melodies are liable to be killed, if sung during inappropriate hours, and whoever listens to them (at wrong hours) courts poverty and shortens his span of life. Exceptions are made on the occasion of marriage."<sup>33</sup> Thus prayers and singing hymns have a great contemplative value.

But for advanced mystics and for inseparable and intoxicated lovers, every moment they can meet and express love to each other is an appropriate moment. All rules and timings are forgotten where timeless divine love of God is to be enjoyed. Gurū Amar Dās says, "If we discuss, debate and ask ourselves which is the most appropriate time for adoration and prayer to God, this is the answer: If we are day and night absorbed in the Attributes of God, one attains Truth and is honoured as a truthful devotee by the Beloved. What kind of unworthy love of God would it be, if we forget Him even for a moment. True devotion is in ever remembering Him. The mind and body attain the bliss and peace of Truth. Not a breath leaves the body without remembering Him."<sup>34</sup> The following are the chief modes of prayer.

#### SIMRIN: CONTEMPLATION OF HIS NAME

The main purpose of all aspects of Sikh worship and prayer is practice of the Presence of God at all times. There should be unceasing awareness of Him. *Simrin* means 'remembrance and recollection.' By Contemplating His Name and Attributes, man realizes that he is ever near God, and the Light of God is steadily revealed to Him within his heart and whole being. It is a vast subject in itself. There are many techniques of recollection indicated in the *Ādi Gurū Granth*.

## RECITATION OF MAJOR COMPOSITIONS OF THE GURŪS

Recitation of such great compositions as Gurū Arjan's *Sukhmani* and Gurū Gobind Singh *Akāl Ustatī*, each of which takes about an hour, are the most efficacious means of worship and prayer. The art of recitation is almost lost. Musical religious poetry of these great compositions is most helpful in contemplation, if recited in rhythmic intonations. Some devotees regularly read *Ādi Gurū Granth* in silent devotion for themselves and not for others, and complete one reading every month.

## KĪRTAN: HYMN SINGING

*Kīrtan* or Hymn Singing helps concentration and contemplation greatly, because music and poetry, when fully exposed in their basic forms and depth, reveal the inner meanings of the hymns even to the common listeners. But unfortunately the performance of *Kīrtan* is becoming a professional art, and the listeners and more so the organizers rarely try to benefit from it spiritually.

All these modes of prayers are to be done while sitting in the presence of *Ādi Gurū Granth*, and in sitting posture and meditative mood. Some people use rosary for recollection. There is no objection to it. But the saints and mystics generally forget the rosary:

*Kabīr merī simarnī rasnā ūparī Rāmī.*

*Ādi jugādī sagal bhagat tā ko sukhī bisrāmī.*

Says Kabīr: My rosary for meditation

Is the divine Name on my tongue.

This is the rosary that has given peace and bliss

To the saints and sages of all ages.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Kabīr, *Sloka*, 1, p. 1364.

During initial stages a rosary is helpful. Some mystics call it a toy to lessen distraction and increase concentration. Many Sikhs use steel rosary and other use cotton rosary.

*ARDĀSA: INVOCATIONAL PRAYER*

All contemplative prayers are performed in sitting posture. *Ardāsa* is an Invocational Prayer which is performed standing. Only a part of it is scriptural text; the rest has taken the present form in later tradition. The word *Ardāsa* is the Puñjābī form of the Persian word *Arzdāshst*: Offering Supplication. In other prayers we speak through scriptural text; we express our feelings and sentiments through well-known hymns on the subject. But in *Ardāsa* we express our own intimate feelings. We converse with God and the Gurū in a personal encounter of I and Thou dialogue. "The prayer of the sitting man is worth only half that of the standing person."<sup>35</sup>

Gurū Nānak says, "With my two hands folded in prayer, I wait and watch seeking benediction from Thee, True Lord, and I stand offering from my heart *Ardāsa*: Supplication."<sup>36</sup> Gurū Arjan says, "With the two hands folded in prayer, I offer my *Ardāsa*. By the blessing and grace of Your Divine Will, my supplication will find fulfilment."<sup>37</sup>

Earthly Kings and even Prime Ministers and Ministers rarely give opportunity to the common man to meet them and converse with them, but God and the Eternal Spirit of the Prophets, by their grace, give leave to all their savants and devotees, to the high and low, to the sinner and the obedient to converse with them in prayer and worship. Through *Ardāsa* a Sikh converses with his Gurūs and God. He seeks their blessings and benediction in his own words. The devotee approaches the Presence of *Ādi Gurū Granth*: the Word and Presence of God and the Gurūs, with assured faith and utter dependence and trust in their grace. The *Ardāsa* is offered with awakened consciousness, downcast eyes and with utter humility, reverence and submission.

The *Ardāsa* may be offered by an individual or by the family, or by a Congregation. If offered by five devoted Sikhs on behalf of others, it is the most efficacious mediation for blessings and grace for others. It is a personal act, by means of which the human



person establishes communion and fellowship with the divine by invoking the eternal Spirit of God; his prophets and all martyrs, saints and religious divines of his own faith as well as of other faiths. In all cases only one person recites the Ardāsa, others stand behind him with folded hands.

#### TEXT OF ARDĀSA

#### INVOCATORY AND CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

*Ek Omkār; Vāhi-Gurū jī kī Fateh*

One God pervades all.

Victory ever is of the wondrous Lord.

May the Glorious Sword Supreme ever come to our aid.

Remember and invoke first

The grace of the Supreme Sword,<sup>38</sup> Almighty God,

And in inward contemplation

Fix your mind on Gurū Nānak.<sup>39</sup>

Then in worshipful remembrance

Think of Gurū Aṅgad and Amar Dās.

May the divine Rām Dās aid us with his grace;

Remember Arjan, Hargobiṇd and the Gracious Hari Rāi.

Remember Venerable<sup>40</sup> Hari Krishan,

Seeing whom all sorrow and suffering depart.

Remember Tegh Bahādur, contemplating whom

One receives the nine treasures<sup>41</sup> of human blessings.

He, the Lord, helps and aids with His grace everywhere.

May the tenth true King of kings, Gurū Gobiṇd Singh

Help us with grace abounding in all places.

Concentrate on *Gurū Granth*, the visible Embodiment of all

Ten Gurūs, the Living Presence of the Revealed Word.

Say *Khālsā jī: Vāhi-Gurū, Vāhi-Gurū*: Wondrous is the Lord.

Congregation utters: *Vāhi-Gurū, Vāhi-Gurū*: Wondrous is the Lord.

Remember the Five Beloved Ones,<sup>42</sup>

Remember the Four Sons of Gurū Gobiṇd Singh<sup>43</sup>

And the Forty Liberated Ones,<sup>44</sup> who suffered martyrdom

Remember those who remained steadfast in Faith,

Who lived in remembrance of God,  
 Who suffered in austere devotion,  
 Who contemplated His Name,  
 And shared their earnings with others;  
 Who fed the hungry with food,  
 And protected the weak with the sword;  
 Who condoned and forgave the transgressions of others,  
 Who seeing evil in others compassionately forgave their sins;  
 Reflecting on their moral and spiritual greatness,  
 Say Khālsā ji: *Vāhi-Gurū, Vāhi-Gurū*: Wondrous is the Lord.  
 Congregation utters: *Vāhi-Gurū, Vāhi-Gurū*: Wondrous is the Lord.

Remember those men and women of the Khālsā *Pañth*,  
 Who sacrificed their life for *dharma*: Faith and Righteousness.  
 Who suffered every limb of their body being cut joint by joint;<sup>45</sup>  
 Who were broken on the wheels;  
 And were tortured and skinned alive;<sup>46</sup>  
 Remember those great martyrs,  
 Who were sawn from head to foot alive;<sup>47</sup>  
 Who were thrown into boiling cauldrons;<sup>48</sup>  
 Who suffered their scalp being dismembered;<sup>49</sup>  
 But still remained unshakable in their Faith unto the last.  
 Remember those brave Sikh women,  
 Who suffered untold oppression in Mīr Mannū's prison,  
 Who suffered under forced labour,  
 And saw their little children cut to pieces,  
 And flung savagely into their laps.<sup>50</sup>  
 Yet none abandoned their Faith,  
 But upheld the dignity of Sikhism unto the last breath.  
 Recollect and think of their immortal achievements.  
 And say Khālsā ji: *Vāhi-Gurū, Vāhi-Gurū*: Wondrous is the Lord.  
 Congregation utters: *Vāhi-Gurū, Vāhi-Gurū*: Wondrous is the Lord.

Remember the Four *Takhats* (Thrones):  
 The Seats of Political Sovereignty of the Khālsā.  
 Remember the sacred historical shrines of the Gurūs,  
 And say Khālsā ji: *Vāhi-Gurū, Vāhi-Gurū*: Wondrous is the Lord.

Congregation utters: *Vāhi-Gurū, Vāhi-Gurū*: Wondrous is the Lord.

First we pray to Thee, Lord  
 On behalf of the *Sarbat Khālsā*:  
 The Commonwealth of Enlightened Ones.  
 May the *Khālsā* ever enshrine  
 The Holy Name of God in their hearts,  
 And thus achieve all happiness.  
 Wherever exists the *Khālsā*  
 May he ever get Thy Protection and Grace.  
 Lord, bestow on the *Khālsā*  
 The prosperity of *Degh*: the cauldron of never diminishing food.  
 And *Tegh*: the Sword of unconquerable sovereignty.  
 May the *Khālsā* Pañth be ever victorious.  
 May the Almighty Sword of God  
 Ever come to our aid,  
 Invoking the glory of *Khālsā* Pañth.

And say *Khālsā jī*: *Vāhi-Gurū, Vāhi-Gurū*: Wondrous is the Lord.

Congregation utters: *Vāhi-Gurū, Vāhi-Gurū*: Wondrous is the Lord.

Lord, give to the Sikhs:  
 The gift of charity,  
 The gift of sanctity of sacred symbols (hair)  
 The gift of disciplined life,  
 The gift of tolerance and trust,  
 The gift of all gifts: the divine Name,  
 And the gift of ambrosial ablution,  
 And a glimpse of Your divine Presence at Amritsar.  
 May the abiding Centres of the *Khālsā* legions  
 And the *Khālsā* flag of Freedom and Justice  
 Ever remain uphold from age to age.  
 May Victory ever be of *dharma*: righteousness.

And say *Khālsā jī*: *Vāhi-Gurū, Vāhi-Gurū*: Wondrous is the Lord.

Congregation utters: *Vāhi-Gurū, Vāhi-Gurū*: Wondrous is the Lord.

Lord, grant to Thy Sikhs a humble mind;  
 Grant to Thy Sikhs high thinking and enlightenment.

May God Himself be the Light of our thoughts.  
 O Lord God,  
 Saviour of the destitute  
 Hope of the fallen  
 Our True Father.  
 Grant us this day.....  
 .....(any special supplication)  
 Lord, our True King, forgive us our transgressions.  
 Extend Thy Helping Hand to all men.  
 Give us the company of such beloved friends,  
 Meeting whom we may remember Thy Name.  
 May the Spirit of Gurū Nānak  
 And the holy Name of God,  
 Inspire and exalt our mind  
 With ever increasing hope, confidence and trust in God.<sup>51</sup>  
 Lord, we seek Thy Will ever to prevail  
 For the good of all human beings we fervently pray.

The whole congregation prostrates before the Holy Book, thereby expressing humility, reverence, rededication and acceptance of the Will of God and the Gurū, of which *Ādi Gurū Granth* is considered Living Embodiment. After kneeling and touching the ground with forehead, the congregation stands up again and recites the supplementary Invocation of the Abiding Faith of the Sikhs in *Ādi Gurū Granth* as the Eternal Gurū. The second portion of this supplementary Invocation also constantly reminds the Sikhs that they were ordained to be a free and sovereign people with independent national cultural identity of their own, which has to work for its higher destiny among all nations and in all countries, with Puṇjāb as their national-cultural Homeland:

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INVOCATION

*āgiā bhai Akāl kī tabhū chālīo Pañth.*

God expressed His Will as Command,

Then was the Khālsā Pañth ordained.

Accept the *Granth Sāhib* as the Eternal Gurū.  
 Believe the *Gurū Granth* to be  
 The Visible Mystic Body of the Ten Gurūs.  
 He, whose heart is chaste and pure  
 Will find in it the revelation of Light of God.<sup>52</sup>  
 The *Khālsā* shall be free and sovereign, and will rule.  
 No one will ever dare to resist this nation's might and power.  
 After suffering from internal conflicts all shall unite.  
 He alone shall be saved, who takes refuge in Him.<sup>53</sup>

The Congregation again prostrates before the *Ādi Gurū Granth*, and when they get up after obeisance, they utter in one voice the following national ovation of the Sikh Community:

*Vāhi-Gurū jī kā Khālsā,*

*Vāhi-Gurū jī kī Fateh.*

The *Khālsā* is dedicated to the Wondrous Lord,  
 Victory is of the Wondrous Lord.

No other prayer and temple service has been instrumental in bringing solidarity, fellowship and single mindedness of purpose in the Sikh fraternity as *Ardāsa* (Invocation Prayer). Assemblies and individuals can give expression to their innocent wishes, their personal or group supplication and prayer, and more so to their collective religious, cultural and political aspirations. It brings us face to face with the Unseen Presence of God. We feel and comprehend His existence. We stand before Him, having overwhelming faith in His mercy, compassion and bounties. We place our desires and hopes, our joys and sorrows at His Feet. He listens to us and draws near us.

When we perform the *Ardāsa*, we recollect all our prophets, saints and martyrs, and also remember great men of meditation and ascetics, concentration of spiritual powers (*japī*, *tapī* and *hathī*). We ask for material, moral and spiritual gifts from the Bounteous Giver, not only for ourselves but for all human beings: *Sarbat dā*

*bhālā*. In an Ardāsa, performed with devotion and with the spirit of self-consecration, we feel that He listens to us, and we scent the fragrance of His benediction.

While in other formal prayers we are bound by the accuracy of text of the scriptures and the music and rhythm of its poetry, Ardāsa is offered in the spontaneous poetry of our hearts and the prose of our sentiments and ambitions. We give free expression to our desires, wishes and our high aspirations, leaving it to God Almighty to answer the just prayer, to give us courage to face affliction of living according to His Will. The following are the salient features of Ardāsa:

(1) The first portion (Lines 1-18 of the translation) were composed by Gurū Gobind Singh in *Vār Sṛī Bhagautī Ji kī (Chandī dī Vār)*, and is preserved in the *Dasam Granth: Compendium of Gurū Gobind Singh's Works*. This is the text that cannot be changed. Through this Invocation the devotee takes his mind in the Presence of the Eternal Spirit of God and the Prophets. There is a repeated assurance in the text of these lines that when we sincerely remember the prophets (the Sikh Gurūs), they come to your aid in all places: *sabh thāin hoi sahāi*. The vision of their Presence, grace and blessings dispel all sorrows. When we remember the sovereign of martyrs, Gurū Tegh Bahādur, and seek his blessings and grace, all the material and spiritual wealth comes surging towards the devotee: *nau niddhi āvai dhāi*. The Tenth Gurū (Gobind Singh), has in the end, assured us that he shall come to the aid of sincere *Khālsā* lovers of God everywhere and at all times.

(2) With the exception of the third paragraph in which we remember the martyrdom of Bhāi Manī Singh and other great apostles, almost the general structure of the whole of the text of the Ardāsa was prepared by Bhāi Manī Singh and his other great contemporaries of *Khālsā* Panth after the death of Banda Singh Bahādur, when they started assembling for their national gatherings at Amritsar. Subsequent martyrdoms began to be added to it. Every Sikh in every home and in every temple was to

remember and pray in the name of the great saints and martyrs of Sikh history.

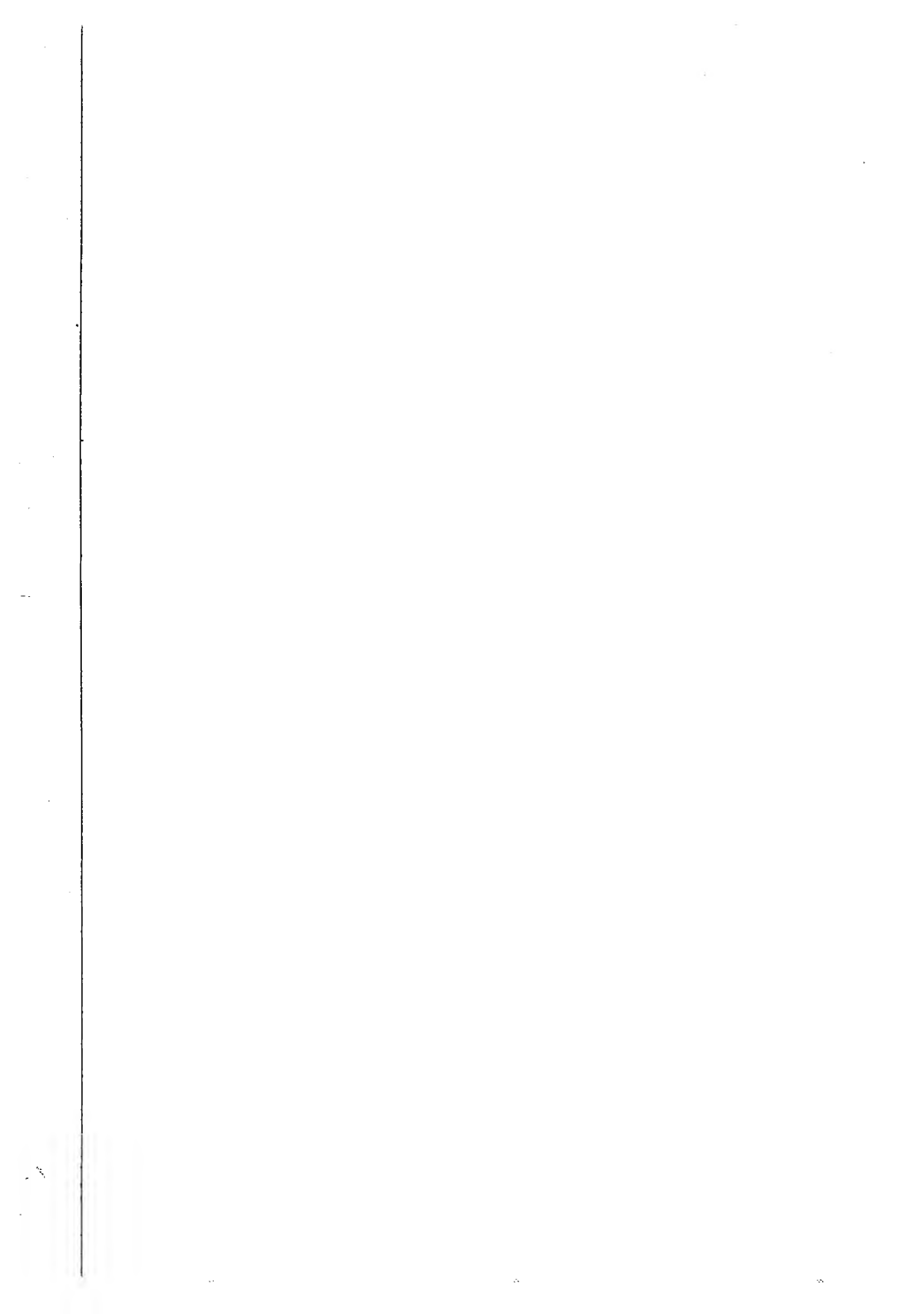
(3) In the last three paragraphs the Sikhs seek the graces and beatitude of life for themselves and for all human beings. They pray for association with pious and devout men, and from God, Who is the source of all charity and Benevolence, they seek the gift of tolerance, humility, patience, contentment, truthfulness, meekness and high thinking. Then, in the lines left blank, the devotee can pour his heart and seek anything, he aspires for. He may seek health, wealth, peace for the dead or freedom from slavery and destitution.

(4) The supplementary Invocations are more or less our national anthems. When after the death of Gurū Gobind Singh, every ambitious saint and every prominent leader of a group started posing as impostor successor of the Gurū, and many still unabashedly do so, they had to be reminded that *Gurū Granth Sāhib* is to be the One and Only Gurū. No human being, no saint however popular, could claim to be Gurū.

(5) The second part of the supplementary Invocation is also significant. During the lifetime of Gurū Hargobind and thereafter upto Gurū Gobind Singh, the cities in which the Gurūs lived, were embryonic sovereign states, and all intrusions by Mughal rulers were fought back and valiantly resisted. This was to assert the political freedom, which the Gurūs established with the power of the Spirit and the Sword. Even though the Sikhs lost their homes and driven from pillar to post for another half a century, and their sufferings multiplied with the invasions of Nādir Shāh and Ahmad Shāh Abdālī, this prayer and a determined vow before God everyday and in every home, kept their spirit of freedom blazing with revolutionary fervour. They joyfully accepted the worst suffering, but they refused to accept slavery of any kind; least of all compromised with the invaders. It is this sense of historic mission and vow of every Sikh, however poor and ignorant, that gives him spartan will-power and courage to die for his freedom and rights.

[illegible]





A very important point now deserves our attention, before we close this chapter. There is a mistaken notion that Sunday services, now common among the Sikhs, were introduced by the Sikh Gurūs. The Sikhs do not believe that God created the world in six days and then took rest on Saturday or Sunday. Before the British Rāj, Sunday was never a holiday, and in Calcuttā even the British rulers did not close the offices or assembled in the Churches on Sundays. The weekend holiday and the Church prayers were observed on Wednesday. It is only when the Christian Missionaries revolted against this practice that offices were closed on Sundays, and Indians were left with no choice except to imitate their Masters in everything. Even the temple bells began to ring louder on Sundays than on any other day.

The fourth Commandment of Moses (*Decalogue*) states, "six days you are to labour and do all your work, but on the seventh day you must not do any work at all." The Babylonians regarded this seventh day (*Sabbatum* as they called it) "an evil day to be spent in fending off the demons, not as a holy one to be dedicated to rest."<sup>54</sup> The Jews considered Saturday the last day of the week, and observed their *Sabbath* on this day. Since the Reformation, the Christians started observing Sunday, the first day of the week as their day of rest. The Muslims obey the following injunctions of the *Kor'ān*: "O ye, who believe! When the call is proclaimed to prayer on Friday, (the Day of Assembly), hasten earnestly to the Remembrance of God *Ẓikr-i-Allāh* and leave off business and traffic. That is best for you, if ye but knew."<sup>55</sup> "It is interesting to note that *Bible* Commandment suggests rest on *Sabbath*, but not prayer and worship. Traditionally it is considered a day for prayer and worship. The question arises, "Did the Sikh Gurūs give clear instructions on some specific days for worship and prayer? Did we have such a tradition of assembling on specific days? The answer is yes. But unfortunately Sikh writers are so obsessed by practice introduced by British Rāj that many of them have even started making fun of their own well-entrenched traditions.

The Sikh Gurūs enjoined the Sikhs to meet twice a month according to the lunar calendar, which was used for recording dates of births and deaths and for all practical purpose. The common man in Puñjāb could read this calendar and know its dates from the sky. The author's illiterate mother could tell just by glancing at the stars the exact time at night, and the moon gave clear indication of the dates of the lunar month. It is probably because of such use of lunar calendar that the Sikh Gurūs fixed two days in a month for formal assembly and prayer in temples, namely: *Sankrāntī*: the first day of the lunar month and *Amāvas*: the fifteenth day of the dark half of every lunar month, the day of new moon, when the sun and the moon dwell together. Upto the British Rāj the Sikhs assembled for congregation prayer on these days, besides of course, the dates of birth and death of the Founders of Sikhism, or the days of martyrdom of the fifth and ninth Gurūs. No Sikh ever assembled for prayer on Fridays or Sundays. Some ignorant writers and journalists have been campaigning against this practice, showing their reformist zeal by considering it a Hindu practice. There is nothing Hindu or Buddhist about lunar calendar. Even the Muslims use them. The Hindus never observe these two days throughout the year. They have different auspicious days according to different sects. Sikh history is full to instances to show that the Mughal and Afghan rulers attacked the Sikhs generally when they assembled on one of these two days in their historical shrines. Bhāi Nañd Lāl, the Poet Laureate of Gurū Gobind Singh, has established the authenticity of this practice by telling us that this was the Sikh practice according to the injunction of the Gurūs:

*ān hajūme khus ki ū dafē balā-sat.*

*ān hajūme khus ki az bahire khudāsāt.*

Blessed and agreeable is the congregation,

Which dispels all evil and affliction.

Blessed and agreeable is the congregation,

Which meets for the sake of remembering God.

All pious and saintly Muslims  
 Meet in congregational worship,  
 For prayer every Friday.  
 In the same manner in our Sikh Faith,  
 The devotees meet in congregations  
 Known as *Sādh Saṅg*: companionship of the saints.  
 In the love and worship of God,  
 They are imbued and illumined.  
 Twice in a month the Sikh devotees  
 Assemble for auspicious worship:  
 On *Sankrāntī* and *Amāvas*,  
 For contemplative remembrance of God.  
 Blessed is the congregation,  
 Which meets for prayer and worship.  
 Blessed is the congregation,  
 Which meets for sincere love and life.  
 Blessed is the congregation,  
 Which meets in remembrance of God.  
 Blessed is the congregation,  
 Which is founded on Truth.  
 Accursed and wicked is the congregation,  
 Where people indulge in fiendish evil.  
 In the end, all who are in such company  
 Will have to suffer shame and humiliation.

Bhāi Naṇḍ Lāl, *Zindagī Nāmāh*, 19-25.

The Sikhs should strictly adhere to this healthy tradition, based on the injunctions of the Founders of Sikhism rather than take a false reformist pride in giving up traditional practice and accepting the Christian Sabbath as our days of prayer and worship.<sup>56</sup> We have already quoted from the scriptures that all days of the week, all weeks of the month and all months of the year are worthy of prayer and worship for individuals. But every religion has formal days of assembly, when they get together for corporal worship and prayer. The tradition for such meetings can be modified from time to time and from place to place, but it should

not be fundamentally changed.

Prophets build institutions for higher and nobler purpose, but these very institutions tend to corrupt those who manage them to such an extent that the House of Prayers become time and money consuming centres of dirty politics and inner tensions. When temples become places for ritualistic services and fail to give religious inspiration, peace and enlightenment, they cease to serve the moral and spiritual interests of Sikh religion.

Like a perennial sacred river, Sikhism has had, during the course of eventful history of five centuries, sometime swift periods of advance, at other times it seemed to become stagnant, and there have been points when morally and spiritually it tended to bend backwards, as it did during the last phase of Ranjīt Singh's rule. But it is Sikh religion, Sikh Scriptures and the countless sacrifices of Sikh fighters for freedom and truth, who have continuously given new dimensions to religious and political outlook in India. It is the first religion with its roots in India, (even Vedic Āryans were immigrants and came from outside) which laid primary emphasis on the fact that spiritual progress is rooted in the social, political and cultural freedom of man.

Hinduism had by and large become too cold, too formalized, and its Brāhmaṇical orthodoxy had exerted such a corrosive effect on the masses and even on the spiritually enlightened, that almost all medieval saints suffered at the hands of this strongly organized class of the twice born: *dvij*.

Islām brought the most attractive and inspiring mysticism in the person of the great Šūfi Saints, but it also brought sword and fire of the most ruthless despoilers of the temples of the infidels, *kāfirs* (Hindu, Buddhist and Jains), slaughtering men and children, enslaving women, and perpetuating such bloodthirsty cruelty that they have left behind them for the historians, a vast museum of nightmarish horrors and crimes.

For three centuries the prophets, apostles and warriors of Sikh Faith fought against this appalling cruelty and barbarism,

perpetuated in the name of God and Islāmic Power. They gave to the people a simple faith, a renewed spiritual sustenance and freedom from fear and insecurity. Sikhism penetrated the heart and soul of the peasants, the artisans, the cobblers and the humblest labourers in all fields of life, and invested them with kingly dignity, revolutionary spirit and boundless spirituality. It gave them a new vision, a new hope and conviction, and inspired them to assert the sovereignty of Truth, Dharma, Equality, Freedom and Justice for all human races and people.

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

- (1) (i) *Mehmā Prakāsh*, (Prose), p. 29.  
(ii) Bhāi Vir Singh, *Asht Gurū Chamatkār*, p. 40.
- (2) Bhāi Manī Singh, *Sikhān dī Bhagatmālā*, Sākhī. 90. (MS).
- (3) Bhāi Gurdās, *Vār*. 24, *Paurī* 1, Line 6.
- (4) *Ibid.*, *Vār*. 9, *Paurī*. 14, Line. 6.
- (5) *Ibid.*, *Vār*. 28, *Paurī*. 7, Line. 4.
- (6) *Ibid.*, *Vār*. 23, *Paurī*. 2, Line. 5.
- (7) *Mehmā Prakāsh*, Part. II, p. 4.  
*Mehmā Prakāsh*, (Prose), MS, p. 28.
- (8) *Ādi Gurū Granth*, *Vār*, Sattā and Balwañd, Verse. 2, p. 967.
- (9) *Ibid.*, p. 966.
- (10) *Ādi Gurū Granth*, *Sawaiye*, Bhaṭṭ Salh, Verse. 21, p. 1396.
- (11) *Ādi Gurū Granth*, *Sawaiye*, Bhaṭṭ Jālap, Verse. 8, p. 1394.
- (12) *Ibid.*, *Sawaiye*, Bhaṭṭ Mathurā, Verse. 21, p. 1409.
- (13) *Ibid.*, *Vār*, Satta Balwañd, Verse. 8, p. 968.
- (14) The thirty-six types of foods which are considered ambrosial are all vegetarian, and meat is considered to be a food apart, fit for lower natures and not for higher and refined souls. This is the Indian tradition.
- (15) J. Marechal, *Studies in the Psychology of the Mystics*, p. 156.
- (16) Abraham Heschel, *Between Man and God*, p. 53.
- (17) *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.
- (18) Pūran Singh, *The Spirit of Oriental Poetry*, pp. 82-83.
- (19) Bhāi Gurdās, *Vār*. 13, *Paurī*. 19, Line. 1.
- (20) Evelyn Underhill, *Worship*.

- (21) Ibid.
- (22) Ibid.
- (23) *Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Amar Dās, *Rāga Vadhanis*, p. 558.
- (24) Lewis Browne, *The Wisdom of Israel*, pp. 133-34.
- (25) St. John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*.
- (26) Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy*, p. 251.
- (27) Plato, *Phaedrus*, 279 B, Jowett's Translation.
- (28) *Ādi Gurū Granth*, p. 784.
- (29) Gurū Gobind Singh, *Akāl Ustāī*. 256.
- (30) Gurū Nānak, *Japuṛī*, *Paurī*. 2.
- (31) Ibid., *Paurī*. 5.
- (32) *The Mathnawī of Jalāu' d dīn Rūmī*, Ed. Reynold A. Nicholson. (3:2375).
- (33) O.C. Gangoly, *Rāgas and Rāganīs*, p. 84.
- (34) *Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Amar Dās, *Srī Rāga*, p. 35.
- (35) Ahmad al Daylāmī, *Sīrat-i-al Ḥāfiḥ as Shirāzī*, Trs. Junāyid-i-Shirāzī, p. 39.
- (36) *Ādi Gurū Granth*, *Srī Rāga*, *Ashṭī*, p. 54.
- (37) Ibid., *Rāga Sūhī*, p. 737.
- (38) *Bhagautī*, Lit, Sword; symbol of Divine Power. In the writings of Gurū Gobind Singh it does not mean Durgā, nor it is used for Durgā by Ṛṣi Mārkaṇḍeya in *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*. It is an Attributive Name for the Sword as the Redeeming Power of God.
- (39) *Dhīyāiai*, contemplate, worship, meditate.
- (40) *Srī*: venerable, glorious.
- (41) *nau niddhi*: divine treasures belonging to Kuberā, the god who is the keeper of gold and silver, jewels and pearls, and all the treasures of the earth.
- (42) *Pañj Piārās*: The Five Beloved Ones: The first five who were ordained as the *Khālsā* Elect of Gurū Gobind Singh namely (i) Bhāī Dayā Singh, (ii) Bhāī Dharam Singh, (iii) Bhāī Sāhib Singh, (iv) Bhāī Himmat Singh, (v) Bhāī Mohkam Singh.
- (43) *Chār Sāhibzādās*: The four sons of Gurū Gobind Singh. The two elder sons, Ajit Singh 18, Jujhār Singh 16, died fighting the Mughals in the battle of Chamkaur. The two younger ones, Zorāwār Singh 8 and Fateh Singh 6, were bricked alive by the governor of Sirhind in 1705 A.D.
- (44) Forty Liberated Ones: The Forty Sikhs who died in the battle of Mukatsar in 1706 A.D.
- (45) Bhāī Manī Singh an outstanding theologian, historian and saint-martyr who suffered martyrdom along with 25 others on June 24, 1734.

- (46) Among 25 companions of Bhāi Manī Singh, Gulzār Singh was skinned alive; Bhūpat Singh's eyes were taken out, and then he was tortured on the wheel. Other prominent Sikhs who suffered martyrdom were two sons of Bhāi Manī Singh, Gurbakhsh Singh and Chitter Singh, and prominent leaders like Sant Singh, Shardā Singh, Udai Singh.
- (47) Bhāi Matī Dās, a leading companion and disciple of Gurū Tegh Bahādur was sawn alive by the orders of Aurangzeb in Chāndni Chowk, Delhi along with his Master on November 11, 1675. A.D.,
- (48) Bhāi Dayāl Dās: He also fell a martyr along with Gurū Tegh Bahādur. He was thrown into a boiling cauldron on November 11, 1675 A.D.
- (49) Bhāi Tārū Singh, a young Sikh peasant of 24 years who suffered martyrdom on the orders of Zākariyā Khān. His scalp was removed along with his hair. He died in July 1745, but it so happened that his tormentor suddenly fell ill, could not pass urine and died four hours before young Tārū Singh died.
- (50) Sikh women prisoners of Mīr Mannū. Mīr Mannū, the Mughal ruler of the Puñjāb, let loose a reign of terror, and slaughtered every Sikh who came in sight. He captured thousands of women and children and subjected them to terrible tortures and sufferings. Besides putting them on hard labour and minimum food of half a *chapātee* (bread), he cut their little children to pieces and threw their limbs in their laps to unnerve them. But they remained steadfast in their faith and died in prison. The Muslim historian Aliu' d-Dīn Muftī quotes the following song of the Sikhs:

Mīr Mannū is our sickle.  
 We Sikhs are his grass-blades.  
 The more he cuts us  
 The more we grow  
 The Sikhs are still found  
 In every hamlet and home.

Aliu' d-Dīn Muftī, *Ibratnāmah*.

- (51) *Chardīān kalān*: The word *chardīān* means ever rising higher and higher, always exalted; the word *kalān*: action, is derived from *kalā* which means one sixteenth part of the moon. The light of the moon goes on increasing everyday till on the fifteenth day we have the full moon. So *chardīān kalān* now means an unshakable optimistic state of mind in which you do not accept defeat, but are sure that victory and perfection are close to you. It is



a state of mind which is cheerful in sorrow and suffering, and stoically optimistic even in the face of hopelessly critical situation. Having steadfast confidence in the saving grace and ultimate justice of God, a Sikh never surrenders to despair and dejection in the face of oppression and tyranny.

- (52) These are the last words of Gurū Gobiṇḍ Singh recorded by a number of historians.
- (53) These are the prophetic words of Gurū Gobiṇḍ Singh spoken to his Poet Laureate, Bhāi Naṇḍ Lāl. See the last verses of Bhāi Naṇḍ Lāl's *Tankhāhnāmā* in Chapter 10.
- (54) Lewis Browne, *This Believing World*, p.73.
- (55) *Kor'ān*, I.xii:9.
- (56) Dr Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Anandpur Sāhib*, pp. 97-98.

## *Part Five*

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*The Turban Victory : The Sikh Turban Case  
In the Crown Court and the Parliament  
of Great Britain.*

**MOTOR-CYCLE CRASH-HELMETS  
(RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION) ACT 1976**

1976 CHAPTER 62

An Act to exempt turban-wearing followers of the Sikh religion from the requirement to wear a crash-helmet when riding a motor-cycle.

*November 15, 1976.*

BE IT ENACTED by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:-

AMENDMENT OF ROAD TRAFFIC ACT 1972. 1972c.20.

- (1) In section 32 of the Road Traffic Act 1972, there shall be inserted after subsection (2) the following new subsection:-
- (2a) "A requirement imposed by regulations under this section (whenever made) shall not apply to any follower of the Sikh religion while he is wearing a turban."
- (2) This Act may be cited as the Motor-Cycle Crash-Helmets (Religious Exemption) Act 1976.

## CHAPTER 17

### THE TURBAN CASE IN THE BRITISH CROWN COURT: DIVINE LAWS AND HUMAN JUSTICE

There is but one law for all, namely, that law which governs all laws; the Law of the Creator, the law of humanity, justice, equality, the law of nature and of nations.

Edmund Burke, May 28, 1794.

There is a point, where even justice is injustice.

Sophocles, *Electra*, 1042.

Every higher religion has two aspects of its theory and practice; the ethical laws and the mystic practices of spiritual discipline. No matter how exalted a religion is, it cannot survive without its laws of social structure and religious practices. Hinduism could not have survived for centuries without the laws of Manu, nor Islām without *Śarīat* (*Shari'a*), nor Judaism without *Torāh's* Commandments. These laws protected faiths from external dangers of cultural erosion, and saved them from disintegration through erratic liberalism or secular misuse of these faiths. Šūfism grew and achieved great mystical heights as long as it remained committed to the framework of *Śarī'a*, but when it tried to break the basic laws of Islām, Šūfism died under heavy legitimate and illegitimate blows from orthodox Islām, backed by fanatical political rulers. Most of these extremely liberal Šūfī Orders degenerated into libertine practices, and made free use of wine and drugs to become intoxicated mystics.

This is very much the situation in Sikhism today, where our

political and religious saviours have abandoned moral and spiritual base of Sikhism, and are indulging in utterly un-Sikhlike practices, and seeking inspiration for political power and cultural self-destruction by either seeking directions and help from the Communists, who do not believe in God, or from the protagonists of Hindu *Rāṣṭra* and Hindu Culture, who have not tolerated any religious minority so far, except when it suits them. Sikhism, as taught and practiced by the Gurūs, is nowhere in the picture except in the lives of isolated religious groups with local influences.

Many Sikhs now in the west, in their zeal to imitate the manners and customs of the country in which they live, shave their hair and beards, drink wine lustily and imitate the worst features of the western society. They indulge in such vices and activities, which are considered acts of apostasy. That is the reason why these Sikhs residing in the west are unable to present either in theory or practice the sublime spiritual and moral aspects of Sikhism. They control the Sikh temples and institutions and misuse the funds. Whenever a religious issue crops up in the west, concerning Sikhs, it is these half sincere and half apostate Sikhs which cause considerable confusion. How can they fight for the religious principles, which they have abandoned. Situation is made worst by some cults, which keep up Sikh appearances and even use Sikh Scriptures as the springboard of their teachings, but put on sale such doctrines and practices which have been condemned in the Sikh Scriptures, Sikh Code of Conduct and history. This is exactly what the *Nirankāris*, *Rādhāsoāmīs* and *Tāntric* cults wearing on Khālāsā dress are doing.

For a Sikh, God is the Primal Law-Giver. The Ten Sikh Gurūs, to whom God revealed the mystery of total divine life, as of course He revealed Himself to many other prophets, are for the Sikhs, the Interpreters of divine Laws, which in the *Ādi Gurū Granth* and *Kor'ān* is termed "*Hukam*": Commandment of God, manifest in His Will, operating in the universe. A Sikh who has attained the

highest spiritual state (*Gurmukh* or *Brahmgyānī*) can intuitively understand the Divine Will of God, whether he lives in a palace or in a hut in poverty. He understands His Will even when he has to climb a scaffold to suffer martyrdom.

With the Will of God is associated Divine Justice. Justice as we interpret it in our constitutional law, has little validity. After some years we do not hesitate to declare that what we considered justice 20 years ago, was really injustice. Tyrants and dictators all over the world make and unmake laws to suit their tyranny and strengthen their iron hold on the taming masses. They send hundreds of people to prison merely on suspicion without taking the trouble of telling them why they are in prison. Wherever there is dictatorship of the Rightists or Leftists, there one finds hundreds of prisoners of conscience, hundreds of innocent people rotting and dying in prisons, waiting patiently for Divine Justice of God to come to their aid. The Justice of God comes to the aid of the people, and as Gurū Gobind Singh firmly believed, the tyrants and oppressors ultimately suffer ignominy and face disgraceful end in history.

In India, so strong have been the feelings of the Sikhs about this conception of Divine Justice, and so firm their determination, inspired by Gurū Gobind Singh, that for freedom and preservation of the Divine Laws of their faith, they have challenged all the laws of the Mughal tyranny, fought bitterly for the whole century till they annihilated Mughal and Afghān rule in the Puñjāb; their Home State and Homeland. During the British Rāj more than 92 percent of those, who went to the gallows for freedom and independence of the country were Sikhs, and even after independence they have consistently resisted those laws, which were a challenge to their language, culture and religious integrity or congregational prayer, the translation of which is given in Chapter 16, shows the chain of martyrs, the Sikhs remember in their individual and congregational prayer. The word martyr was unknown in Indian history, and there is no word equivalent to martyr in Sanskrit, Pālī or Hindī, because this

country, which gave remarkable thinkers, philosophers and religious leaders, failed to give one martyr. The first to lay down their lives for their Faith were the Sikh Gurūs, and their dedicated disciples.

So those men of religion, which have a firm faith in Divine Laws and Divine Justice, fear not any secular laws to uphold the sanctity of their faith and freedoms. This is the only way in which the sanctity and the integrity of the moral and spiritual laws can be maintained. Divine grace and power are pre-suppositions of all religious laws, which make them work relentlessly against secular oppression. Every despot, capitalist, exploiter, however great and powerful, will have to face divine Justice of God:

*vaḍā hoā dunīdārū galī saṅgalū ghaṭī chalāiā.*

*agai karṇī kīraṭī vāchīai bahī lekhā karī samjhāiā.*

He who had become a great man of the world

With chains around his neck, he is led;

And for his transgressions he is tried.

After death, he faces the reckoning of his misdeeds.

From punishments of his sins, he finds no escape.

No one then listens to his woeful cries.

The spiritually blind wastes his precious life.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Nānak, Āsā dī Vār, 3:3, p. 464.*

Thus those, who become great through exploitation, sin, social and political crimes, will not go unpunished by God. Man made laws, or arbitrary laws of the dictators, made for their own self-preservation and continuity of tyranny, may help them for years, but the Justice of God would certainly chastise them for their misdeeds and crimes, committed in the name of just laws. For every crime committed by the oppressors and tyrants against humanity, against religious and cultural freedoms, a just punishment is given by the Dispenser of Justice, whose Will works through the people and through His gifted Apostles. All types of violence against God, against nature, against men of faith, against

humanity is punished. All the hateful species of panders and seducers, who call evil good, and good evil, who put darkness before light, and who one way or the other have made this world a den of political exploiters, liars and killers in the name of the State, will ultimately suffer for their deeds.

It is a pity that the British government knowing full well that the Sikh soldiers refused to wear helmets in the two World Wars, passed a law compelling Sikh motor-cyclists to wear crash-helmets. When we see that two Commonwealth countries, Australia and Singapore, who learnt their civil laws from Britain, have exempted the Sikhs from wearing crash-helmets, the attitude of the British government was still deplorable. I am glad that the law has been challenged by a few courageous Sikhs. The author of this book appeared as an expert witness on Sikh history and philosophy in the Court, presided over by Honourable Judge Lawrence Verney, Q.C. on February 18, 1976, and gave the following statement in the court in the case of Mr. Baldev Singh Chāhal. The Judgement of the learned judge was a turning point in Britain's decision on the exemption given to the Sikhs from the law of wearing crash-helmets. The Sikhs were given freedom to ride motor-bikes even before the Bill was passed.<sup>1</sup> The following is the full text of the evidence of the author.

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT IN AYLESBURY CROWN COURT OF  
HONOURABLE JUDGE LAWRENCE VERNEY, FEB. 18, 1976.

"My Lord, the question here is not of the turban and the crash-helmet, as the prosecution sees it. The question here is of law, which has caused grave injury to the sanctity of the turban of the Sikhs. A Hindu would not, under any circumstances, accept a law which compels him to take beef, nor a Muslim ever obey a law compelling him to take pork even if the government proves that it is done for their physical well-being. This law of crash-helmet has been passed from the point of view of Christian religion and



European society. For the British, the turban and the helmet are identical and interchangeable, but for a Sikh to wear a cap, a hat or a crash-helmet is an act of apostasy. A Sikh who does so is an apostate from Sikhism.

"My Lord, to clarify this statement I must first explain what sanctity of the Sikh turban means, and why it is a sin for a Sikh, more deadly than death, to wear a cap or a hat or a crash-helmet.

"The turban no doubt is worn by *Chin* tribes in Burma, who are Christians, and by Arabs in the Middle-East, because Prophet Moḥammed wore it. Among some Arabs it is a symbol of royalty. It is also worn by Rājput princes as a symbol of royalty in India. But in Sikh religion and society, it is inseparably connected with baptism and ordination.

"In Sikhism, there is no distinction between a layman or a priest (man or woman). A Sikh who accepts baptism and has basic knowledge of scriptures, can perform any function of a priest, including marriage. A priest can become a manager of a factory and still carry on missionary work. There is no distinction between a lay Sikh and a missionary Sikh. The garb and the basic symbols of holiness are to be worn by every devout and true Sikh. He who does not wear the turban and keep uncut or untrimmed hair and beard with a turban, may be a novice or admirer of Sikhism, but he is not a Sikh in any sense of the word.

"The same symbol may have a secular meaning for one people, but it may have a great spiritual significance for another section of humanity. Among the Jews and the Romans, death on the Cross was a sign of humiliation, shame and ignominy. (*Cor.* 18: 23, *Heb* 12: 2). Yet, for the Christians it became through Christ the supreme manifestation of God's love for man. It is said to be a symbol of new life, a new outlook and complete union with Christ. To take up the Cross means to turn away from the service of the world, for the service of God. So is the turban of the Sikhs. It is a symbol of new life, a new outlook and a spiritual rebirth.

"The first question asked to a novice when he seeks Sikh

baptism is, whether he accepts death in order to be a reborn in this spiritual rebirth of baptism. If he says no, baptism is refused to him. "If you want to play the game of Love", says Gurū Nānak, the Founder of Sikhism, "then come to my path with your head on the palm of your hand."

"Before a Sikh takes the vow of wearing a turban and keeping hair and beard, he takes a vow of accepting death rather than renouncing, under any circumstances, the symbol of his divine personality and faith. Just as a Christian would not wear a Hindu idol or a talisman around his neck in place of the Cross, even though the former is proved to be more powerful and useful in warding off dangers, so a Sikh would not wear a Hindu Cap, a Christian Cowl or a British hat or helmet under any circumstances.

"What surprises freedom loving enlightened persons is not the refusal of the Sikhs to wear crash-helmet, while riding a motor-bike, but the imposition of law compelling the Sikhs to wear helmets while riding a motor-bike, when the British government knew full well that the Sikhs rejected the steel-helmets in the battlefield during the wars. It is a pity that the British government has now passed a law, which compels them to wear helmets, and thus compelling them either to commit an act of apostasy or to give up riding a motor-bike. Punishment for disobeying military command during the war was death, but the Sikhs did not care for it. They refused and revolted against the order. They refused to fight if they were compelled to do so. The military command and the law of the steel-helmet was atonce changed, giving exemption to the Sikhs. The sanctity of the turban and their solemn vow that they would, under no circumstances, wear helmets meant more to them. The Divine Law clashed with the secular law, and the Sikhs stood firmly by the Divine Law.

"We have very old documents of the Sikh Code of Conduct in the British Museum, particularly No. 14152 bb 2. It is entitled *Rehitnāmā Prahlād Rāi and Bhāi Nand Lāl*. The first and foremost injunctions are: Cursed is a Sikh (i) who visits prostitutes, (ii)

gambles, (iii) who smokes, (iv) who goes out in the society without a turban or wears a cap instead of turban, (v) who cuts or trims his beard and hair, (vi) who eats meat, cut according to Muslim rites. Those who contravene or transgress any of these commandments are treated as apostate Sikhs. Any backsliding is an act of heresy. They must seek baptism again if they wish to become morally and spiritually accepted Sikhs.

"My Lord, it was Edmund Burke, who said that there are two and only two foundations of law: utility and equity or justice. The law compelling everyone to wear crash-helmets was made with an eye on utility. I have seen with my own eyes a number of people, wearing crash-helmets, dying in motor accidents. Other parts of the body are as vulnerable and sensitive to injury as the head. But as far as the Sikhs are concerned, the second foundation of law, that of equity and justice, has been completely ignored.

"Human laws, no doubt, are made out of the instinct of self-preservation and are subject to change where they infringe anyone's personal, religious and cultural freedom. The Divine Laws or religious laws grow out of the spiritual will of man to conquer fear and death, to overcome suffering and transience, and live in inner peace and glory of eternity. The turban is worn by the Sikhs under a divine command of the Founders of Sikhism, aiming to give them inspiration for achieving such a state of mind and spirit.

"No Indian or British law can compel or coerce the Sikhs to change this Divine Law of our prophets, or modify it under any circumstances. The turban is a part of this moral and spiritual discipline and way of life, whose sole purpose is to conquer fear and death. Nothing else, least of all a crash-helmet, nay not even a steel shirt, a steel pant and a steel coat can give that sense of moral and spiritual power and security, which the turban and the Sikh Code of Conduct, associated with the turban, gives it. A Sikh who wears a helmet in any form, abjures his faith morally and spiritually, though he may continue to call himself a Sikh by

reason of his birth in a Sikh family. This law compelling the Sikhs to wear crash-helmets is unreasonable, infringement of the religious freedom of the Sikhs in U.K., the majority of whom are now the citizens of this country, which believes and even loudly preaches democratic freedom and equality for all minorities.

"Laws, said Plutarch, are like spider's web. They hold the weak who are caught in their meshes, but the rich and the powerful escape it." This law compelling everyone driving a motor-bike to wear crash-helmet is ornamental to all Christians, but to the Sikhs it has proved to be a spider's web. As weak and helpless victims of this spider's web, the Sikh religious minority in this country has come to this court for justice. Injustice in this case has arisen out of a too literal and absolutely secular constructions of the law. The Sikhs have only two alternatives in the face of such a law. They should either abjure their faith in order to obey it, or they must break this law till it is suitably changed or declared bad in law by the courts. No self-respecting people can accept the first alternative. It would amount to signing the death warrant of their own faith and culture.

"My Lord, the Sikhs who are accused of driving the motor-bike without wearing the helmet, are not breaking the law wilfully. They are on the other hand merely seeking justice and resisting any conscious or unconscious attempt on the part of the British government to cause injury to the sanctity of their turban and all that is associated with it. Justice, my Lord, is truth in action. So far truth in action has been the crowning glory of the courts of this country, and the judgements of British courts, upholding the religious and cultural freedoms of the individuals and the minorities, have been frequently cited in Indian and Asian courts. I hope, your Lordship will study the case and the law from the moral and religious point of view, and give the Sikhs freedom to preserve the sanctity of the turban, which is a symbol of their religious discipline and way of life."

LT. GENERAL SIR REGINALD ARTHUR SAVORY'S  
BATTLE FOR THE SIKH CAUSE

Lt. General Sir Reginald Arthur Savory, who commanded the Sikh Regiment in the First World War, has fought a heroic battle for the Sikh community in peace time against his own government. He did not forget them, and I am sure they will not forget him, when writing about the military exploits of the Sikhs in history. He wrote to the Members of the Parliament, and in his statement in Aylesbury Crown Court, he said in answer to a question from the Honourable Judge, Lawrence Verney, that if the Sikhs had been forced to wear helmets, there would have been Mutiny, and the revolt by the Sikh soldiers might even have led to defeat of the British in war. Such is his faith in the military ability of the Sikh soldiers. In an article published by leading papers, he sums up his views thus: "I served with the Sikhs for 25 years and know something of them. In the Old Indian army there never was so much as a hint that Sikhs in the interest of uniformity on parade, should discard their turbans and shave their heads. This would have been to invite mutiny. So strong were their convictions as to the turbans that even in battle they disdained the protection of the steel helmet.

"As for beards, any man, who as much as trimmed his whiskers, was brought before a tribunal of Sikh Officers and punished by them for contravening the laws of religion. That did not mean that they were allowed license as to the colour, shape or size of the turbans, or as to whether or not they should adorn them with badges. Each regiment had its own rules on such matters and saw that they were obeyed.

"As for hygiene, those who know the Sikhs, know too, that they spend much of their spare time under water taps, washing themselves; hair, beard, body and all. The difficulty, I found was to stop them. I write this because I owe the Sikhs a great debt and so does England. They fought, suffered and died for us in two

World Wars and in many lesser campaigns. I shall not forget the bravery of my own battalion in Dardenelle in 1915, where they lost over thousand men in a few months and received the thanks of the Parliament. Let us in England treat them now, as in the past, with the understanding, they deserved."

Sir. General Reginald Arthur Savory assured the court that during war he did not know of any Sikh dying of bullets hitting his head. He knew of cases when some bullets were lodged in their turban without causing any injury to the head. He cited a case when a Sikh fell with a bullet hitting his head, and after sometime he regained consciousness and told the General that the bullet had hit only the comb (*kañghā*) in the head and he was perfectly safe. The General believed that they did get Divine Protection from injury to their head with their turban.

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. The Hon'ble Judge Lawrence Verney brought out two points in his Judgement:
  - (i) that he was convinced that the Sikhs would not wear helmets under any circumstances.
  - (ii) that the Sikhs were not consulted before the Bill was passed.

## CHAPTER 18

### TURBAN DEBATE IN THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT

If people wish to follow their own religious convictions,  
Why can, we not allow them to do so?

Lord Kinnaird, *House of Lords*, October 5, 1976.

The Motor Cycle (Wearing Helmet) Regulations, 1973 (SI, 1973, No. 180), a copy of which was laid before the House of Commons in February 1973, came into operation on June 1, 1973. Mr. Ronald Bell, M.P. Buckinghamshire, presented a motion in the House of Commons totally opposing it on the ground that 70-80 percent of motor-cyclists were already wearing crash-helmets and the law was unnecessary. In 1956 Mr. Harold Watkinson rejected it on the advice of the police, who thought it would be impossible to apply the law thoroughly. Mr. William Hamling, Mr. David Crouch, Canterbury and Mr. Enoch Powell also supported Mr. Belle's motion, maintaining that the principles of avoidance of loss of lives. Later, Mr. Mully reported in the House of Commons that there were in previous years about 800 deaths a year, and within four months of the introduction of the law, there were 276 deaths between July and October 1973. This meant that the rate of deaths did not decrease.

COUNCILLOR FRED BALCOMBE, LORD MAYOR OF MANCHESTER  
AND MR. CLEMENT FREUD GIVE STRONG  
SUPPORT TO SIKH CAUSE

Probably, the first to express generous sympathy for the Sikhs was

Councillor Fred Balcombe, Lord Mayor of Manchester, who on hearing that Mr. Sunder Singh Sāgar had been fined £ 5 for riding a motor-cycle without helmet, paid the fine for him. It was Lord Mayor, Councillor Fred Balcombe who personally wrote to Prime Minister, Harold Wilson to revive in the Parliament, the issue of Sikh motor-cyclists and their aversion to wear crash-helmets. It was at this time, Mr Clement Freud, Liberal M.P. for Isles of Ely wrote in *The Express*, "There are, as most of us know, two kinds of laws: the first and more important law is the law that implements the commandments, and if memory serves, these deal with murder, rape, arson, theft, perjury, all of which are discouraged. Then there are manufactured laws, required by civilized society which appertain in case of equine footpath-fouling and riding tandems without rear light.

"I had always presumed that if the law has not deeply kept its hand in by inconveniencing the preparators of minor misdemeanours, but recent events have made me suspect that this is not the true order of things. Take the Sikhs and their mopeds. The law states that anyone riding a moped, scooter or motor-bike must wear a crash-helmet. The Founder of Sikhism stated that all Sikhs should wear turbans. Now the reason why crash-helmets are legally required is in the interest of the driver's safety; if they remove them they are clearly more vulnerable, and the reason why the Sikhs wear turban is that the turban is symbol of faith, and if they remove them, they feel they are betraying the teachings of the Gurū.

"On a higher plane our God never told us to wear crash-helmets. Their Gurū told them to wear turban. In this argument they have the edge. During the last two World Wars, nearly a quarter of a million turbaned Sikhs were killed or wounded fighting for Britain, and not one of them was court-marshalled for being improperly dressed in the face of shell-fire, though their bravery won them medals from Victoria Cross down. I do not know which sanctimonious administrator it was, who first conceived the



idea of bringing the ponderous machinery of the law against turbaned scooter-riders, but surely the death in the battle of 85,000 Sikh Soldiers fighting for our cause entitles their progeny to a little legal compassion. A.P. Herbert wrote that the common law of England has been laboriously built about a mythical figure; the figure of the reasonable man. All I ask is, that it should be administered by people of reasons and tolerance."

Mr. Winston S. Churchill (Conservative M.P. for Stretford); Mr. Hatton, Labour M.P. for Moss Side Manchester, and Mr. Cyril Smith, Liberal M.P. planned to present a Bill in the Parliament on this issue, which was, however, taken up later by Mr. Sidney Bidwell. Mr. Winston S. Churchill then presented a Motion in the House of Commons, supported by Honourable Richard Crossman and 24 other M.P.'s, reminding the House to recognize that the Sikhs fighting with Great Britain in two World Wars were exempted from wearing steel helmets in the front line of the battle.

#### MR. SYDNEY BIDWELL PRESENTS THE BILL IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Presenting a Ten-Minute Rule Bill, Mr. Sydney Bidwell (Labour M.P. Ealing, Southall) on January 28, 1975 in the House of Commons, said: "I seek to persuade the House to support a Bill, to enable turbaned Sikhs to ride motor-cycles. It is especially important to those Sikhs who wish to motor-cycle to work, when public transport is not available or to ride a motor-cycle as a part of their employment.

"News of my move to bring a Bill before the House has evoked much ill-informed talk and newspaper correspondence. There must be no doubt that the long coiled hair and the turban go together as one of the five K's; as they are called, of the articles of religion dating back over 500 years. Definitions have been clearly made by the Gurūs from time to time. There are obviously

occasions when the turban is unwound and removed, but that does not mean that any other head covering may be put on its place. It is this religious fact which I did not at first understand and which others may not have understood.

"Some Sikhs have cut their hair, and have thus turned away from the full faith and would not qualify for exemption under the Bill. It is because of the devout Sikh's firm attachment to the long hair coiled and the turban that it is not now possible for him to ride the motor-cycle. Because of the present law, he has, so to speak, lost a freedom.

"It was the Rt Hon. Member for Yeovil, Mr. Peyton, who as Minister of Transport brought in the present law. There was a debate, but the religious exemption argument was not made at that time. Some Hon. Members opposed the law on grounds of individual freedom as a number are opposing the compulsory wearing of car seat belts. That debate is still before the House. I will not dwell upon it, except to say that in that case there will be exceptions on pure grounds of expediency and not on grounds of principle. It is possible for those who support crash-helmets and seat belts in general also, to support my Bill.

"I must admit that I was slow off the mark in the previous Parliament, when the Hon. Member for Stretford, Mr. Winston S. Churchill, led a motion on this question. I became convinced when I realized that to uphold the Sikh's religious belief meant in reality, not being able to ride a motor-cycle. As most Hon. Members know, there is a long historic tradition of toleration in this matter. In battle time the Sikh has never been called upon to discard his turban in favour of the war hat or tin helmet worn by other soldiers under battle fire. It has been known for bullets to lodge in the turban and hair of the Sikhs. No one would care, if at that time a Sikh was not wearing a tin hat. So far as I know, right upto the present time, the long hair and turban are freely accepted in the three branches of the British Armed Services. I cannot imagine that the true Sikh is ever told that his services are no

longer required in any shape or form.

"As citizens of the Commonwealth, many Sikhs from the middle 1950s onwards have come to the United Kingdom. They are hard working and are winning their way in British society. In the past, because of native prejudice and misunderstanding they have had to struggle for the right to wear the turban, particularly at work. We have overcome objections to the right to wear long hair and the turban, notably in transport in the Midlands and in London. Some factory cases have been fought and overcome. Uniformed caps and helmets are not enforced against the Sikh's religious belief. In the Post Office and in the police forces the turbaned Sikh is tolerated. Seldom was the turban question raised by employers and work people until the motor-cycle crash-helmet question arose.

"The turban is tolerated on building sites, where all workers, except Sikhs, are to be seen wearing protective headgear. Hon. Members will recently have witnessed this when our new car park was being built. I have a turbaned constituent who is a steel erector. The fact is that if compulsion to wear any type of headgear came into being in building sites, many would leave the building industry and do something else.

"Last year, with other Members and Sikhs from various parts of the country, I saw the present Minister for Transport, Rt Hon. Fredrick Mulley. We found his attitude as mulish as that of his predecessors; argumentative with no imagination. He seemed to think the Sikh exemption would lead to other clamours for exemption. I do not think that the House will believe it probable. No other group is distinguished by long hair and the turban, and the Sikhs can be identified by their names.

"Sikh representatives are eager to enter into discussions on style, colour, and helping to secure enforcement, if the law is changed. Long hair and several yards of cloth in the turban, is a form of head protection and could in certain circumstances prove to be an even better protection than some ill-fitting crash-helmets.

The present Minister for Transport (Mr. Fredrick Mulley) challenged me to show how the requirement to wear a crash-helmet might impair the Sikh's equal employment opportunity. Although my Rt Hon. Friend said that he might reconsider his position, in fact he has not done so. I cited to him the case of the turbaned policeman. We are trying to recruit more Sikhs into the police forces. A turbaned Sikh would not under the new regulation be able to grab a motor-cycle to chase a criminal. A devout Sikh cannot apply for a job as a Post Office messenger boy. My Rt. Hon. Friend replies to those two cases I have cited: "Let the Sikhs throw away the turban."

"This is why I have presented the Bill. I am sure that the House would not wish to take the attitude, "Let the Sikhs throw away their turban." I recall to the House the civilized words of my Rt Hon. Friend, the Home Secretary (Rt Hon. Roy Jenkins M.P.). In 1966 he defined integration thus:

'Not as a flattening process of assimilation, but as equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance.'

"As far as I know, no other country gives less than the fullest tolerance to the turbaned Sikh, which means the occasional man on the motor-bike. The Bill is supported by the British Council of Churches. Our country is world renowned for its hard-won principles of religious and political freedom. The Bill has wide support from both sides of the House and groups. It would upset no one. It would be a small step for us to take, based on a great principle of religious freedom. Without it, we are no civilized and are lesser people."<sup>1</sup> At the Committee stage, 15 members out of 16 attended the meeting with Mrs. Joyce Butler in the Chair.

#### TRIBUTES PAID TO THE SIKHS BY MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

At the Committee stage, glowing tributes were paid to the Sikhs on June 23, 1976, and I consider it my duty to record some of

them, which would be very useful for historians of Anglo-Sikh relations in this country and in India. Two minor amendments of Mr. Bidwell were accepted. To Mr. Peter Fry's question as to what steps would be taken to make sure that those who are exempt are genuine followers of Sikh religion and not people who are merely using it as an excuse not to wear a crash-helmet? Mr. Bidwell said, "That is a perfectly fair question, for example a person—the long haired lover from Liverpool, who puts something on his head may be tempted to masquerade and describe himself as a Sikh." The onus of proof should be on the motor-cyclist. Instead of suggesting the paraphernalia of carrying identity cards and so on, we thought that it would not be beyond the wit of the police to determine a person's bonafides. The members of the Sikh Community are, as we shall show in our arguments, honourable people, and they will cooperate in every way to see that the purposes of the Bill are not thwarted by any kind of masquerader.

Mr. Bidwell further pointed out that the turban was tolerated in the British Armed forces and in the Post Office Engineering Unit. "No Sikh in the Navy, said Mr. Bidwell, "I am talking of devout Sikhs, in the army or the Royal Air Force is obliged to wear the same kind of headgear as that worn by other serving men.

"There was the case of a turbaned policemen, and there are now turbaned men on the buses and other transport. That is tolerated.

"In the Post Office Engineering Union, there is a marvellous spirit of toleration, and there is POEU-Management agreement that no turbaned Sikh is to be turned away from applying for a position, if he is qualified and suitable for telecommunications engineer's post, notwithstanding the fact that there are circumstances at work, where normally other kinds of headgear are required, not by law at the moment, but by edict or union-workers arrangement. This is the mood and spirit of toleration into which they have entered, and as things stand, a Sikh would

not be exposed to the requirement to wear protective headgear, but would be withdrawn from such work.

"When the considerable engineering job of building our car park here at Westminster was under way, Hon. Members may have noted that whereas other workers were wearing industrial headgear, the Sikhs were wearing their turbans. I asked one of them what would happen if he were compelled to wear different form of headgear...., and he said that he would have to leave this type of employment. The situation regarding a turbaned policeman is ridiculous, and this is where the law is made to be an ass, because he cannot jump on a motor-bike and chase a criminal.

"A Sikh in the Army cannot be a motor-cyclist without being sacrilegious. I checked that with the Army Minister not too long ago..... The Sikhs also wear turban when playing cricket, because there have been sporting occasions when the turban has been laid aside and the *pugree*—the small piece of cloth which is used for convenience instead of a turban—worn instead, people have tried to argue that the requirement to wear crash-helmet is valid. It is not. Who is to lay down religious laws on this? Some one who lived in India years ago and thinks he knows it all? I suppose one could go to Warwick and Leamington for authenticity, Southall, or Golden Temple of Amritsar, if one wanted to know the laws of the Sikh religion. Such laws are very well set out in history."<sup>2</sup>

#### MR. KENNETH MARKS' STATEMENT

Mr. Kenneth Marks, the Under Secretary of State for Environment, said in the House of Commons, "Very rarely do Ten-Minute Rule Bills reach a Committee stage, let alone a debate in the Second Reading. Hon. Members will have noted that the original Bill was not debated on the Second Reading. There were no objections from any part of the House, not from the Government. I am therefore taking this opportunity to express the Government's view on the substance of this amended clause. We have great sympathy for the Sikh's point of view. Bearing in mind

the long tradition of religious freedom in this country, our position could hardly be otherwise. Moreover, the Sikhs have a most prodigious record of honourable service to this country in the past, and are still making a valuable contribution to British society in many ways. They are loyal, law abiding and devout people, and there is no doubt of the sincerity of their desire to have freedom to wear the turban; one of the symbols of their faith. We also freely recognize that in their long campaign to obtain the exemption, which the Bill would provide, they have conducted their case with impressive fervour and dignity. If the House accepts the case for granting an exemption to the Sikhs, the Government will respect the decision and carry out its provisions. The Bill is based on religious tolerance and that, too, is an important and vital part of our society in war as well as in peace. There is no possibility of a compromise decision on this difficult choice.”<sup>3</sup>

#### MR. CYRIL SMITH'S STATEMENT

Mr. Cyril Smith, Liberal M.P. Rochdale, strongly supporting the cause of the Sikhs said, “The great thing about the Bill is the religious tolerance that it shows. That is extremely important. I am the only Unitarian who is a member of the House of Commons. It is a religion which has been persecuted over the years. Indeed, in many parts of the country, even today, it has only just been admitted to the Council of Churches. I value religious tolerance and religious freedom very much. In my view the Bill is a significant contribution to democracy and to the rights of human beings as a whole.

“The Minister said that one objection that has been made to the Bill—not by him—was that the law should apply equally to everyone. But then one argues as to which law are we talking about. Are we talking about the law which allows a man to practice the religion of his choice? Or are we talking about the law which requires a man to wear a helmet when he is driving a motor-cycle?

One can argue that sort of case all day. For me, the key law is the one which deals with human liberty. In my view, that law and that justification for the Bill overrides all other considerations.

"I, too, pay tribute to the record of the Sikhs over the years in the service that they have given this country. I warmly welcome the Bill, and hope that it will have a speedy and successful passage through the House."<sup>4</sup>

#### MR. FRANK HATTON'S STATEMENT

Mr. Frank Hatton, M.P. for Manchester, Moss Side, said, "I also warmly welcome the statement, which the Minister has made on behalf of the Government. I remember in my own city of Manchester the campaigns in which I was involved in helping the Sikh Community to bring about a change of attitude towards wearing of the turban in the public transport services. But I fully accept what the Minister said, that this a very different matter. My knowledge of the Sikh Community is such that I believe that they themselves will help us. As the Hon. Member for Dorking, Sir George Sinclair said, we look to them to see that this is a genuine exemption for people who rightly deserve exemption. In terms of some of the thinking and actions that are taking place in this country, this will be a real message that the British House of Commons, representing the nation, can take a tolerant attitude towards a community within our midst. We want them to remain within our midst and work with us. So I warmly welcome the Bill in this respect."<sup>5</sup>

#### MR. JOHN OVENDEN'S STATEMENT

Mr. John Ovenden, M.P. for Gravesend said, "I must admit, that I have some grave doubts whether it is the job of the law to legislate on the subject of safety. But if I were to go into them, I am sure I should be completely cut of order. I will content myself, by saying how much the Bill is welcomed by the Sikh community in my constituency, as it is by the Sikh community throughout the



country. I think that at no time could it have been better for Parliament to be considering a bill of this nature. When we are faced with such instances of racial intolerance and bigotry, as we have seen over the last few weeks, I think that this is a very good time for Parliament to go on record as being on the side of religious freedom and religious tolerance. I congratulate my Hon. Friend, not only on producing the Bill, but for having the good fortune to have it going through Committee stage at this time.”<sup>6</sup>

#### SIR GEORGE SINCLAIR’S STATEMENT

Sir George Sinclair, M.P. Dorking said, “I hope that the Hon. Members will come to the point on which we are now engaged, and give us the reassurance that the discipline of ensuring that this privilege is confined to strict followers of Sikh religion is imposed also by themselves as a community. They are used to discipline and we have shared it with them. I hope that in everything they say in public, they will reassure us that they will keep this privilege strictly to themselves.”<sup>7</sup>

#### MR. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL’S STATEMENT

Mr. Winston S. Churchill, the well-known writer, Journalist, and M.P. for Stretford (grandson of war-time Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill) was the pioneer in moving the conscience of his people within and outside the House of Commons in support of the cause of the Sikhs. He said, “I warmly welcome the Bill and congratulate the Hon. Member of Ealing-Southall (Mr. Bidwell) on his perseverance in this matter and on the fact that he has at last brought round the powers of Government with which he and I, together with other Hon. Members in the House, have been battling. We have battled with Governments of both colours for several years on this question.

“It is universally accepted in the House of Commons that the immigrant Communities must be treated equally and without discrimination..... However, I think that we must go a step further than saying that they must be treated equally and without

discrimination. It is important in this age of cynicism and breaking away from religion and traditions of the past, that those who wish to respect those traditions and religions should be allowed to do so. It is important that we in Parliament should uphold that right and respect their religious beliefs.

"I believe, as has been mentioned already, that there is something of a misunderstanding among some of the groups that have opposed this measure of exemption for the Sikhs wearing the turban. Anyone who is fully versed in the history of Britain's relationship with the Sikhs and the present Sikh community would, on reflection, accept that the measure before us is fully justified.

"There can be no doubt that, as a people, we owe a deep debt of gratitude to the Sikh community over many years. For me it is sufficient that in our time of need twice this century, when we needed the Sikhs to stand by us, they did so and in the case of too many, died beside us in two World Wars to enable us to live in the freedom, which we today enjoy. We did not then require them to wear a steel helmet in the front line of the battle. If it was sufficient to do that when we needed them in a desperate situation, the least we owe them, now that sort of crisis is past, is to continue respecting these traditions. That is why I wholeheartedly support the Bill, which is very much in accordance with the long libertarian traditions of our country."<sup>8</sup>

Summing up the debate, Mr. Sidney Bidwell, paid tribute to all supporters of the Bill, and particularly to Mr. Cyril Smith, Liberal M.P. for Roschdale and Mr. Winston Churchill by saying, "I do not want to single Hon. Members out, but I am grateful to Hon. Member for Roschdale (Mr. Cyril Smith), because he has marshalled the Liberal troops behind the Bill. It achieved the remarkable and unique situation that it originally had a backer from everyone of the six parties in the House of Commons, which means that the Ulster Unionists were there also, and I felt we might succeed.

"I am grateful to my colleagues in my own party and to the Hon. Member for Stretford, Mr. Winston S. Churchill, who is a modest fellow. Although he spoke powerfully, and I am sure great attention will be paid to what he had to say, he forgot to say that he was the veritable pioneer. He brought before the House the original motion to collect support. I do not think he was fully aware at the time that I had a considerable Sikh Community; a little larger than his own. But he was on the beam from the word 'go', while I had not arrived at a final determination in my own mind. I think that is worth mentioning. Of course, history is on his side. What we are about to do today will not be kept just to ourselves; the message will go out to the world that Britain remains great, sane, sensible and tolerant."

The House of Commons passed the Bill on Friday, July 16, 1976 when the Rt Hon. Michael Foot, the leader of the Labour party was in the House; 40 members from all parties voted for it while 11 members voted against it.<sup>9</sup>

#### LORD AVEBURY INTRODUCES THE BILL IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

On October 5, 1976, Lord Avebury, the Liberal Member of the House piloted the Bill in the House of Lords for the second reading at 2.58 a.m. The author was in the House to witness the proceedings that morning. Lord Avebury said, "It was a great honour for me when I was invited to pilot this Bill through your Lordship's House..... The Bill has the very simple purpose of exempting Sikhs from the requirement of wearing crash-helmets, when riding motor-cycles. In considering the Bill there are three questions which we should evaluate. First, is the wearing of the turban an essential article of the Sikh Faith? Secondly, if so, what special arrangements have been made in the United Kingdom and in other countries for Sikhs to wear the turban in circumstances where others must wear some other type of headgear? Thirdly, in the light of the answer to the first two questions, should the

arguments for religious freedom outweigh those of public policy, which led to the compulsory introduction of crash-helmets in the 1972 Road Traffic Act?

"There is an absolutely no doubt whatsoever that the wearing of the turban is an essential part of the Sikh religion. The ten Gurūs, the founders of the religion and the architects of it, all wore the turban themselves. In the Holy Book *Sri Gurū Granth Sāhib*, the first Gurū, instructs his followers, "Keep the God-given form intact with the turban on your head." I might have quoted many similar injunctions by the other Gurūs, particularly the Tenth, also from the *Rehītnāmās*: the Code of Conduct of the religion.

"My Lords, I have also consulted the authorities in the Sikh Gurdwārās in Bradford and Southall, and I have had the benefit of advice from one of the foremost and distinguished Sikh scholar in the world, Dr Trilochan Singh. The opinion of these authorities is unanimous. To quote from a book of Dr Singh, shortly to be published, and which he has given me permission to refer to:

'The turban of the Sikhs is not merely a head-dress. It is inseparably connected with Sikh baptism and the Sikh Code of Conduct.'

"That is as authoritative a statement and interpretation of the scriptures as you will get, because in the Sikh religion there is no hierarchy of clerics who can add to or embellish the doctrine as time goes by. This is because the tenth Gurū (Gobind Singh) nominated the Holy Book as his successor. Where all are agreed on a meaning of the Holy Book, there can be no room for dispute. Dr Singh has merely stated the basic truth which all Sikhs must agree.

"My Lords, I turn to the second question..... In recent years there have been some disputes concerning the freedom of the Sikhs to wear the turban in a number of occupations, in particular in some of the major transport services in our cities, where it was a requirement in the conditions of service that a uniform had to be worn, which included originally some other form of headgear

than the turban. To the best of my knowledge, these disputes have now all been resolved, and everywhere they have been resolved in favour of the liberty of the Sikhs to wear the turban. Even on building sites, where other employees are required to wear the standard hard hat for reasons of safety, large building firms like Costain have made an exception for the Sikhs.

"If one turns to the case of motor-cyclists elsewhere in the Commonwealth, in States that have otherwise made crash-helmets compulsory, as in the United Kingdom, there has been an exemption for Sikhs. That is certainly true in the countries from which I have been able to obtain information—Singapore, Malaysia, Western Australia and in Saskatchewan. In Saskatchewan, the requirement that Sikhs should wear a crash-helmet was ruled unconstitutional in the Supreme Court on the grounds that it would interfere with the practice of religion.

"Finally, I turn to the third question. Personally, I should like to see more restrictions imposed on the use of motor-cycle by young people, but that is another question. My Lords, I think it would be generally agreed that the measures that we take to protect individuals from harm are matters of expediency, whereas the freedom of the Sikhs to wear the turban, as I have shown, is a fundamental question of the religious principle. If it is said that the Sikhs can avoid any conflict with the existing law by using other means of transport, that is tantamount to saying that we will deny them freedom to engage in certain occupations where the use of a motor-cycle might be incidental to the employment, such as the Police, the Post Office and certain units of the Armed Forces.

"Nor can it be maintained that we have not already on the Statute Book many examples of exemption on the grounds of religion, the latest of which is the Employment Protection Act 1975, which granted exemption from belonging to a union to certain people who object on religious grounds. Noble Lords will be aware that a case has recently been tested in the courts, when Members of the Christadelphians were dismissed by British Rail

for refusing to join the National Union of Railwaymen. They appealed against the dismissal and have been upheld by the Industrial Court. There are many other examples of exemption from the general law on religious grounds, and so no precedent is being created by this Bill.

"From one point of view we might say this is a small Bill; it is short, and as regards its effect, it may not seem to be of tremendous importance. But it is of tremendous importance, of fundamental importance to the Sikh Community, and it is essential, if we are to comply with the spirit as well as with the letter of the Human Rights Convention. It will be hailed as a great step forward in the Sikh Community in our own country, and across the world, I believe, it will enhance the great reputation this country has earned for conferring freedom on all the citizens of our country. I beg to move."<sup>10</sup>

#### LORD MOWBRAY AND STOURTON'S TRIBUTE TO THE SIKHS

Lord Mowbray and Stourton paid a glowing tribute to the Sikhs in his short speech. He said, "The question of Sikhs and crash-helmets has aroused some interest and public discussion over the last few months, not only in the Sikh Community, where, as we know, feelings run very high, but also in the country at large. Some commentators have, on occasions, questioned the exact theological status of the turban and whether it is absolutely binding on a Sikh to wear one. However, I would suggest that this is not a fruitful line of discussion. The study of other religious systems is not one that can be mastered in a short time, and this is perhaps particularly true of the great oriental religions. However, as in all cases involving religious convictions of others, we must respect even when we do not necessarily understand. Also we ought to be guided in matters concerning other faiths by the members of those faiths themselves. When in the case of the Sikhs you find a whole religious community united in its strength of feeling on a given issue, it would seem to be most foolish to

question their judgement. I would submit that so far as concerns the Sikh religion, we should accept what the Sikhs themselves say.

"To turn to another aspect of this subject, it was perhaps inevitable that some commentators would see the proposal to exempt Sikhs as having implications for race relations; to use the current terminology. Fears have been expressed on occasion that to exempt the Sikhs might arouse feelings of resentment among the rest of the population, and this would naturally impair racial harmony. If this is so, if there are persons, who feel such resentment, then I would argue that this is because they are inadequately informed; in particular they must have forgotten that during the two World Wars Sikh troops in the forces of the British Empire were not forced to wear steel helmets.

"Even with Friday sittings and late nights and early mornings, we should be here from now until Christmas if we were to give adequate discussion to the Anglo-Sikh military tradition. It could be argued that this subject is rather more congenial, rather more constructive, rather more in accord with the nation's best interest and finest traditions than many of the matters which we will be considering over the next weeks, but let that pass. To recount just one incident in their glorious history, on July 4, 1915 a Sikh Regiment went into battle at Gallipoli with 10 Officers and 700 men. At the end of the day, two Officers and 70 men survived. During the Second World War 1,12,000 volunteered, and that does not include the substantial numbers who were already serving in the Indian Army before 1939. These men in many cases crossed two continents in order to fight and, if need be, to die in a war with whose causes and aims, they were by no means intimately involved. Why did they do so? I would submit that they found that the British Empire provided them with scope and inspiration, and a fuller outlet for their energies than many recent accounts of Imperial history would have us believe.

"The Sikhs fought side by side with Britain in our wars because the Empire inspired their idealism and harnessed all the noblest

instincts of a warrior race in a common cause. As long as Britain is a nation, we will commemorate the heroism of our dead, whose sacrifices secured our national survival. As long as we do this, we acknowledge an undying debt to the Sikh people, to whom we are bound by the most sacred of ties, in that some of our best youngmen died on the same battlefield in the same fight. These are ties and debts that we must remember when we consider race relations. Indeed, I feel that we should not use the term at all with reference to our relations with the Sikhs. To do so would display insensitivity and indeed irreverence. It would be an insult to the fallen to acknowledge no further bond to their descendants than that of race relations.

"However, this is the essential connection between Anglo-Sikh military history and the matter we are considering today, none of this would have been possible, if we had attempted to force Sikh troops to wear tin hats. If we had done this, we would immediately have deprived ourselves of the Sikh's services. This is recognized in the Indian Army today by the exemption of Sikh troops, from the regulation of protective headgear. As General Sir Reginald Arthur Savory (who incidentally wanted very badly to be here tonight and only the late hour prevented him) who took part as a subaltern at the Gallipoli engagement, which I mentioned, and who was later Colonel-in-Chief of the Sikh Regiment, has said, 'In our hour of need we did not press the matter of headgear on the Sikhs, it would be downright ignoble, I would suggest, to press it now.'

"If there are those in the country who do not understand why we are enacting this measure, then we must explain the facts to them. I have confidence in the British people respect for their traditions. I believe that they will readily understand as long as they are given a full explanation, and I would urge noble Lords to support this measure."<sup>11</sup>



## EARL GREY'S MAIDEN SPEECH SUPPORTING THE SIKHS

The author was in the House of Lords on the morning of October 5, 1976 when the Noble Lords paid glowing tributes to the integrity, heroism and character of the Sikhs. After the most impressive speech by the Noble Lord Mowbray, the short maiden speech by Earl Grey was the last generous tribute to the Sikhs. Earl Grey said, "I recently saw a heading in an Indian newspaper which read: 'We die with turbans.' Part of the heading has been substituted with words: 'Let us live, work and die with turbans.' That is the crux of the matter. We have in this country the laws which are laid down for the protection of the community at large, mostly based on the assumption that we are all the same. There are, as we know, exceptions to some rules. The law advocating the wearing of the crash-helmets, while driving a motor-cycle, may very well be an exception in the case of the Sikh community.

"The Sikhs, as a young nation, are renowned for their fighting ability and their allegiance to this country. When World War II was declared, a military order was issued stating that every soldier in the Indian Army should wear a steel-helmet. The Sikhs refused to fight if they were compelled to comply with that, and the order was later withdrawn in their favour. There are a number of letters from Commanding Officers, highly commending the Sikhs in the battles, and I will illustrate this with some extracts to show that the many yards of cloth wound around the head of the Sikhs gives effective protection. A Colonel Hughes, who commanded a Puñjāb Regiment writes, 'The Sikhs all wore the head-dress and there were no more head injuries in the battalion than in any other battalion wearing steel-helmets.' There is a story of the noble Viscount, Lord Monckton of Brenchley, concerning a Sikh who bicycled diligently from Singapore to Great Britain to join the 10th Hussars. When he arrived at Tidworth the question arose as to whether the Sikh would be able to wear his turban. The Noble Viscount, who was then a Brigadier, referred the question to His Royal Highness, the late Duke of Gloucester, who was

Commander-in-Chief, who said that without question the Sikh could, provided he displayed the Regimental badge on his turban, which he duly did. Sir Reginald Savory also gives instances of having known Sikhs picking bullets out of their turbans during and after battle. In *The Sikhs* written by General Sir Charles Gough, he says that, 'under no circumstances, not even to save his life in fever, will a Sikh allow his hair to be cut.' These are but few extracts, of which there are many. To the Sikhs, the turban is a symbol of dignity and self-respect. A Sikh's way of life is wound up, if noble Lords will excuse the expression, with wearing of the turban and the use of other symbols. We in our Christian religion have ways and rituals which are in themselves very peculiar to other creeds.

"My Lords, the laws laid down by the Gurū state that the Sikhs must not smoke, cut or trim their hair, and these rules are followed strictly by the faithful. In occupations where the wearing of protective helmets or uniform caps is compulsory, the Sikhs have campaigned vigorously for their religious beliefs to be accepted, and this they have achieved in many instances. As a minority religious sect, one must show tolerance and understanding to their religious beliefs. As has been shown, if not proved, by the various extracts I have used, the turban in itself, with the long hair, offers some protection, even if it is not, as in my view, as effective as a regulation crash-helmet. Only time will tell if the Sikhs will be a hazard to themselves or other road users."<sup>12</sup>

LORD WELLS-PESTELL'S STATEMENT  
ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT

Lord Wells-Pestell said, "I want to intervene only briefly for the government. While the Bill was being considered in another place, we made it clear that our attitude to it was neutral, and that it is the position at present..... Noble Lords have listened to the persuasive arguments for Sikhs wearing turbans to be exempt, and I think most of us would say that we applaud without reservation

the persistence of the Bill's sponsors in piloting it this far, and pay tribute to the way the Sikhs themselves have made their case over the past three years. All of us recognize the great contribution they have made to this country, as the noble Lord, Lord Mowbray pointed out, both in war and peace, and I would not want to say anything to detract from that. Indeed, it would not be right that I should do so. They follow their religion devoutly and sincerely, and many of us perhaps wish many other people would do likewise, and the turban is an important symbol of their faith.

"It has been suggested that it may be possible for a Sikh to wear a helmet over the long hair. I have no doubt that this is physically possible, and that on occasion, such as when playing sports, Sikhs secure their hair other than with a full turban. But the Government understands that the Sikh religion forbids the wearing of anything over or under the turban, so there seems no scope for a solution by trying to devise a turban shaped crash-helmet. The Bill does not tend to define a Sikh or a turban, and I am sure that is right. Any definition would be very difficult to frame with accuracy, and would create more anomalies than it would solve. The burden would be on the accused to prove that he was entitled to the exemption, and I have no doubt that any attempt by non-Sikhs to evade the regulations by pretending to be a Sikh or wearing a bogus turban would be easily detected by the courts."<sup>13</sup>

The Bill, also received the strong support in short speeches from Viscount Barrington, and Lord Kinnaid.<sup>14</sup> Lord Monson also welcomed the Bill, but he sounded a discordant note on the basis of some articles written by the Editors of *The Sikh Courier*, London. It is a Quarterly Journal, appearing irregularly, whose aim is to support and explain genuine Sikh causes. But in this case they published articles manifestly sacrilegious and highly damaging to the cause.<sup>15</sup> Lord Monson also referred to one Lady not named by the Noble Lord, who informed him, or rather misinformed him that hardly 8 or 10 percent of the Sikhs regards

the wearing of the turban as an essential religious requirement. I wish the noble Lord Monson visits one of the half a dozen Sikh temples in London on any Sunday and find out the percentage of the Sikhs wearing turban. He should also attend a meeting of the Sikh Students Federation, London University and he will find that over 80 percent of the Sikh boys born and brought up in U.K. wear turbans.

The whole of this book makes it clear beyond doubt that the Sikh religion from its very inception has its moral and spiritual discipline inseparably connected with the hair and beard, and it is this discipline which gave it strength to survive the onslaught of invaders, who destroyed whatever came in their way from 16th to 18th century. They almost completely wiped out Buddhism and Jainism from North India. Even the sects of Kabīr, Nāmdev and Schools of Śūfis were wiped out by the bigotry of the Mughal rulers and Afghān invaders. Sikhism alone stood firmly and not only preserved its political and spiritual identity, but sealed the inroads of the invaders. They were able to do so because they stuck tenaciously to the discipline of the Turban and the Sword. No Sikh Apostle or Saint, Sikh or authentic non-Sikh writer has even remotely suggested that the disciplinary rules of Sikhism allow each individual to choose for himself whether he can or cannot benefit from his hair, turban and other symbols.

During the Indian Freedom Movement 1908-1930, Sikh political prisoners were forcibly deprived of their turbans, iron bracelets (*Kaṭā*) and even under-wears (*Kachh*). The eminent Sikh Saint, Bhāi Sāhib Raṇdhīr Singh, and the *Ākālī* leader Bābā Kharak Singh had to remain in prison bare-headed upto 1922 during their life imprisonment terms. It was only when Bhāi Sāhib Raṇdhīr Singh went on a fast of forty days without taking a drop of water and the news of his suffering leaked out, and the loud protests from the Sikh community compelled the British government in India to grant permission to the Sikh prisoners to wear turbans. For 22 years the Sikh political prisoners refused to

wear caps or hats, and preferred to remain bare-headed than wear anything but a turban. Political status was also granted to these prisoners in the same year.<sup>16</sup>

I am sure the Sikh community in Britain will remember with gratitude and pride the sentiments and feelings expressed in the House of Commons and the House of Lords by Hon. Members and Noble Lords. Some of these tributes paid to the Sikhs, recorded in this chapter, will go down in history to cement race relations in Britain.

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

- (1) *Report of House of Commons Debate*, January 1975, Column. 222 to 224.
- (2) *House of Commons: Official Report, Standing Committee*, F. Wednesday, June 23, 1976, Column. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.
- (3) *Ibid.*, Column. 10, 11.
- (4) *Ibid.*, Column. 13.
- (5) *Ibid.*, Column. 9.
- (6) *Ibid.*, Column. 12, 3.
- (7) *Ibid.*, Column. 18-19.
- (8) *Ibid.*, Column. 11, 12, 20. at 11 A.M.
- (9) (i) Tellers for the AYES in the House of Commons : Mr. Sydney Bidwell and Miss. Jo Richardson. Those who voted for the Bill were : A.J. Beith, A. Bowden, Sir Bernard Braine, Lewis Carter-Jones, Kenneth Clarke, Ivor Clemitson, Michael Cocks, Clinton Devis, Harry Ewing, Michael Foot, Ben Ford, Clement Freud, W.E. Garret, Ian Gow, Ted Graham, J. Grimond, Walter Harrison, Frank Hatton, Brynmor John, Ron Lewis, Roderick Mac Farquhar, Ian Mikardo, Alfred Morris, Arthur Palmer, Laurie Pavitt, Fred Peart, Tom Pendry, C. Price, Sir Brandon Rhys Williams, St. John-Stevas, Narman, Michael Shersby, S.C. Silkin, Nigel Spearing, Dr Shirley Summerskill, Peter Temple Morris, George Thompson, Jeremy Thorpe, Cyril D. Townsend. Raphael Tuck and Bernard Weatherill.
- (ii) Tellers for the NOES were : Mr. Ronald Bell and Mr. Jerry Wiggin. Those who voted against the Bill were : Andrew Bennett, Bob Cryer, Victor Goodhew, S. John Langford-Holt, Carol Mather, Nicholas Winterton, Fergus Montgomery, Michael Neubert, J.W. Rooker, William Ross, and R. Taylor.

- (10) *House of Lords: Official Report*, Monday, October 4, 1976, Column. 1055, 1056, 1057, 1058.
- (11) *Ibid.*, Column. 1059, 1060, 1061, at 3.07. A.M.
- (12) *Ibid.*, Column. 1061, 1062, 1063, at 3.15 A.M.
- (13) *Ibid.*, Column. 1067, 1068, at 3.27 A.M.
- (14) *Ibid.*, Column. 1064, 1065, 1066, 1067.
- (15) Lord Monson referred to articles of Mrs. Pamela Mc Cormack co-editor *Sikh Courier*, who also writes under the name of Manjit Kaur. She wrote extremely damaging article in C.R.C. Journal (October 1976, p. 15). She tried to prove that "other turbaned Sikhs (that is unorthodox turbaned Sikhs) do not feel it wrong to wear a helmet instead of the turban when they felt it necessary for safety. This is a matter of personal conscience." A few years earlier, Mrs. Pamela Mc Cormack translated the *Rehitnāmā* and expressed just the opposite views. The very suggestions is false, perfidious and dangerous. Sikhism does not change, the way tastes and conscience of Mrs. Mc Cormack has been changing in the last decade. In the fifties, when she took Sikh baptism from Sañt Fateh Singh, she correctly preached that smoking and taking intoxicants were acts of apostasy and deviation from the true path. Now she herself commits these acts of apostasy, calls the wearing of the symbols a matter of conscience. Sikhism has never allowed itself to suffer changes according to the whims and tastes of those who adopt it.
- (16) *Autobiography of Bhāi Sāhib Rañdhīr Singh*, Translated by Trilochan Singh.



## *Part Six*

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### *The Sikhs and Sikhism*



A PRACTICING SIKH

Dead to the world,

A Sikh lives in the spirit of the Gurū.

A man does not become a Sikh

By merely paying lip service to Him.

A Sikh dispels all doubts and fears,

And lives a life of deep patience and faith;

Verily, he is a living martyr.

A slave of the love of the Lord,

He does, what the Lord Wills;

He forgets all hunger and sleep in His Love,

His hands are busy helping the needy,

His hands are busy comforting the weary;

His hands are busy serving the lowly;

His hands are busy washing their feet.

Magnanimous, tolerant and serene,

He lives in the service of humanity.

In glory, a Sikh does not laugh,

In suffering, he does not weep;

He is a seer living in His Presence;

He is a devotee imbued in His love.

He steadily grows into perfections;

And is blessed and worshipped

Like the full moon on sacred days.

Bhāi Gurdās, Vār. 3, Paurī. 18.

## CHAPTER 19

# FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS OF SIKHISM

### FUNDAMENTAL ARTICLE OF FAITH :

#### *MŪLMAṆṬRA AND GURMAṆṬRA*

*Mūlmaṇṭra* and *Gurmaṇṭra* in the Sikh Scriptures have been One and the same ever since they were revealed to Gurū Nānak. They have come down to us only through well-established written tradition. Cult groups, virtually disassociated from Sikhism, even during the life time of Sikh Gurūs, have tried to corrupt *Mūlmaṇṭra*, *Gurmaṇṭra* and also distort *Gurbāṇī*, but the *Mūlmaṇṭra* and *Gurmaṇṭra* of Gurū Nānak, recorded in all authentic recensions of *Ādi Gurū Granth*, historically acceptable *Janam Sākhis* and *Gurbilāses*, *Vārs* of Bhāi Gurdās, is absolutely correct and the same is read as:

*Ik*: The One Transcendent God

*Oṃkāṛ*: All-pervading Immanent Spirit

*Satnāmūi*: His Name is Eternal Truth

*Kartā Purakhūi*: Creator, Perfect Being

*Nirbhau*: Without Fear

*Nirvairi*: Without Enmity

*Akāl Murti*: Immortal His divine Image

*Ajūnī*: Unborn

*Saibhaṃ*: Self-Existent

*Gurparsādī*: By His Grace attained.

The *Mūlmaṇṭra* is based on Gurū Nānak's experience and vision of the Unmanifest Absolute One and only One God, and His Manifest Immanent, All-pervading light *Oaṃkāṛ*. This *ik* *Oaṃkāṛ* is also called the *Bij mantra*, and is present in all invocations. The

divine Attributes of God are given in the Mūlmaṅtra. It embodies the divine Attributes, the Luminosity of the Unmanifest Absolute God and His All-pervading Light, which gives life and divine light to all living creatures. It unfolds a vision of the ultimate Reality and the creative power behind the universe.

Contemplation and meditation of the Mūlmaṅtra opens the inner-most being of man to the spiritual consciousness of the Immanent and Transcendent Presence of God. In *Ādi Gurū Granth*, we find it in 33 places. Besides being placed at the opening of new *Rāgas*, it is particularly attached to two major compositions of Gurū Nānak, namely *Japuṁ* and *Asā dī Vār*.

For invocations as minor sub-headings, a part of it, *ik Oamkār*, *Satināmū kartāpurkh gurparsādī* is used in *Ādi Gurū Granth* only eight times; while a still shorter invocation *ik Oamkār Satgurparsādī* is used 525 times. These minor invocations are not Mūlmaṅtras. They are used even while writing a letter. For writing Encyclic Letters (*Hukamnāmās*) these invocations were still reduced to brief statements, *ik oamkār guru Sat*. Gurū Gobind Singh introduced a number of other invocations such as, *Vāhi gurūjī-ki-Fateh*, *Tav prasād*; *Akāl Sahāi*. These minor invocations are not maṅtras and are not used for meditations.

Bhāi Gurdās, the Co-compiler of *Ādi Gurū Granth* has explained in detail the significance of Mūlmaṅtra in his two verses (*Vārs*), 26 and 39:

*ekamkārū ikāṅg likhī urā Oamkār lakhaiā,*  
*Satinām kartā purkhū nirbhau hoi nirvairū sadāiā,*  
*akāl mūrati partakh soī nāu ajūnī saibaim bhāiā.*  
*gurparsādī su ādi sachū jugah jugantariū hondā āiā.*

After writing the numerical One: *ikāṅg*  
 Symbolizing the Transcendent God: *ekamkār*,  
 The letter *Urā* was written along with it,  
 Symbolizing *Oamkār*: All-pervading Immanent Spirit.  
*Satinām*: Eternal Truth is His Name.  
*Kartā-purkhū*: He is Creator, Perfect Being.

*Nirbhau hoi*: being, ever Fearless  
*Nirvairū Sadāiā*: He is known as without Enmity.  
*Akāl-mūratī*: His immortal image is visible presence.  
 His attribute is *Ajūnī*: Unborn.  
 He is Self-Existent: *Saibhaṃ*  
 By the grace of Eternal Gurū: *Gurparsādī*  
 He is achieved: The Primal Truth  
 Who ever exists from age to age.

Bhāi Gurdās, *Vār. 39, Paurī. 1.*

As break away cults like *Minās* had already been corrupting Gurbānī, distorting Mūlmaṅtra and Gurmaṅtra, Bhāi Gurdās not only clearly states what Mūlmaṅtra in Sikh meditations is, but also gives clear expression to Gurū Nānak's Gurmaṅtra, when he says:

*Vāhigurū Gurmaṅtra hai*  
*japī haumai khoī.*  
 Vāhigurū is the gurmaṅtra  
 Contemplating which the disciple  
 Gets rid of all I-am-ness: ego consciousness.

Bhāi Gurdās, *Vār. 13 Paurī. 2.*

### CONCEPTS AND BELIEFS

Throughout their writings the Sikh Gurūs who have contributed to *Ādi Gurū Granth*, and Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh in his philosophic compositions in *Dasam Granth*, speak of the perennial philosophy of man in the world, and the relation of his mind and soul to the human world on this earth and the universe around him. Gurū Nānak believes with Plato "That perfect life would be a life of perfect communion with other souls; and there is a law of Destiny, that the soul which attains not any vision of truth in company with God, and the soul which does not transcend the body and mind, suffers transmigration."

Generally, sages and seers in Asia, and the east and west have expressed their thoughts through simple devotional teachings. In

some places Gurū Nānak and Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh also have done so. But we see Gurū Nānak expresses his views through debates and dialogues with Yogīs, *Pundits*, Muslim theologians, men of knowledge (*giānīs*), ascetics of various creeds. He patiently listens to their point of view, and of those who wished to impress him with their knowledge, penance, ascetic practices. He gives his point of view in such a way that it is at once a subtle criticism and presentation of his doctrines and experiences, which reflects a repudiation of the traditional views and revelation of a new outlook and new experience. In the *Siddha Gosfī* alone the *Nāthparāthī* Yogīs pose twenty-three questions, and each question gives their well-established views. Gurū Nānak politely but firmly refutes their views, and gives his own doctrines in the light of mystical knowledge and experience with a subtle and sharp criticism at times, but inoffensive, when the question is polite and gentle, and vigorously counter-offensive, when the questioner is haughty and arrogant.

In countless hymns like those of *Japujī* and *Mārū Sohle*, there are profound reflections on God, Creation, the Universe, the human world, the joy of life, the beauty of nature, and the bliss of morally and spiritually enlightened life.

Like Jesus and Buddha, Gurū Nānak met not only the intellectual and spiritual elite, but he felt concerned mainly about the poor, the out-castes, the sinners, because their hearts and souls were receptive, and they not only accepted the new faith but also the new prophet. What mattered was the inner illumination that enabled the believer to feel and experience inner transformation. For those simple folks, Buddha reduced the path to four-fold path or eight-fold *dharma*. Gurū Nānak gave them simple three-fold or four-fold meditational practices or ethical principles such as:

- (i) *nām, dān, isṇān*: Name, Charity and Bathing;
- (ii) *dayā, dharm and dān*: Compassion, Righteousness and Charity;
- (iii) *khimā, garībī, sewā*: Forgiveness, Humility and Service;

- (iv) *sidak, sabr* and *sañtokh*: Unshakable Faith, Patience and Contentment;
- (v) *kirt karmī, wand chhakanā* and *bhāṇa manāṇā*: Earn one's living, share one's food, and Abide by God's Will.

#### *NĀM*: THE NAME OF GOD

Aldous Huxley says, "The simplest and most widely practised form of spiritual exercise is repetition of the Divine Name, or of some phrase affirming God's existence and the soul's dependence upon Him."<sup>1</sup> Brother Lawrence, the French mystic, calls it "Practicing the Presence of God." He says, "That practice, which is alike the most holy, the most general, and the most needful in the spiritual life is the practice of the Presence of God. It is the schooling of the soul to find its joy in His Divine Companionship, holding with Him at all times and at every moment humble and loving converse, without set rule or stated method, in all time of our temptation and tribulation, in all time of our dryness of soul and disrelish God, yes, and even when we fall into unfaithfulness and actual sin..... When we are busied, or meditating on spiritual things, even in our time of set devotion, whilst our voice is rising in prayer, we ought to cease for one brief moment, as often as we can, to worship God in the depth of our being, to taste Him though it be in passing, to touch him as it were by stealth."<sup>2</sup>

*Nām-Simrīn* is not muttering of Name. It is contemplative meditation, remembrance and recollection of His Attributes, and hearing them within our own consciousness. Its external basis may be the tongue, the lips or the breath, but Simrīn really involves the mind, the heart and consciousness. It is a journey towards inner solitude, love of the Light of God within us, till the Name of God is engraved within our heart and soul, and it becomes the ecstasy and vision of God.

Gurū Gobīnd Singh says, "You achieve nothing by spiritless repetition of the Name, no matter how long you do it." There is a tendency amongst bigots, fanatics and spiritless preachers to

vulgarize the true Name by loud empty repetition. They not only vulgarize it, but despiritualize it by uttering it like mindless dead souls. Says Pūran Singh, "Mere repetition may be death, though repetition is also life. Simrin or Remembrance is Love in action. And His Name is He Himself. The Word is God. With the Word on our tongue, God is in our voice... Remembrance of Him", says Gurū Nānak, "is what gives true life. *Rehirās*. *Simrin* is the true Builder, the slow silent Architect of the Soul."<sup>3</sup> This fundamental spiritual meditation and mystical doctrine is beautifully expressed in the following hymn:

*divā merā ekū nāmū dukhū vichī pāiā telū.  
unī chānanī ohī sokhiā chūkā jam siu melū.  
Remembrance of the One Name of God,  
Is the lamp within my heart;  
Into it, I have poured,  
All my sorrow and suffering as oil,  
The Flame of the lamp  
Has burnt all the oil,  
All fear of the death has departed.*

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Nānak, Rāga Āsā, p.358.*

"The Divine Name is the Flame, which when lighted within, burns all sorrow and suffering, fear and agony, till the Flame becomes an illuminating Light of Love, and Love becomes ecstasy and the highest enlightenment."

#### *DĀN: CHARITY*

In Hinduism, *dān* (charity) is fruitful only if it is given to Brāhmin or through a Brāhmin. But the Gurū says, "*garīb kī rasnā gurū kī golak*: The mouth of the hungry and poor is the treasure-chest of the Eternal Gurū."<sup>4</sup>

Gurū Angad describes Charity and Benevolence in his sermon to his disciples recorded in *Sikhān dī Bhagatmālā*. Bhāi Lālū Budhvār, Bhāi Durgā and Bhāi Jīwandā presented themselves in

the *durbār* of Gurū Aṅgad and humbly sought spiritual guidance, acting on which they could attain enlightenment. Gurū Aṅgad said, "There is no religious practice and meditation which is as fruitful in bestowing enlightenment as Charity (dān) and benevolence (*parupkār*), (lit: being benign and generous to others)." Benevolence and charity is of three kinds:

"First, a person uses his earnings not only wisely for himself, but for serving the needy, the destitute and saintly persons, and shares his surplus income with others.

"Secondly, we can serve others not only by giving them money when they need it, but personally looking after the sick, and giving solace and consolation to those who live in physical suffering.

"Thirdly, it is charity and benevolence to impart wisdom and knowledge to others and give them spiritual instructions. One should always pray for the welfare and success in noble achievements of others. This is also charity and benevolence."<sup>5</sup>

#### *ISHNĀN*

*Ishnān*, lit. bathing, and it stands for inner ablution through prayer and meditations. Both the physical cleanliness and inner purification of mind, heart and soul are essential.

#### *WANḌ CHHAKNĀ*

*Wanḍ-Chhakṇā* is defined by Pūran Singh thus: "To share our bread and joy and love and attainments of God-realization with all. To give a feast of our flesh and blood, to be Christs, Buddhas, Gurūs, and not men only. Above humanity, living outside our bodies in touch with super-humanity of Higher Worlds."<sup>6</sup> We find this doctrine clearly stated in the hymns of Gurū Nānak and his successors, and also in *Janam Sākhī*. Gurū Nānak says:

*ghāṭi khāi kichhū hathū dei.*

*Nānak rāhū pachhāṇih sei.*

He who earns his living

With righteous labour,



And gives out of it  
 Something to the needy  
 With his own hands;  
 Such a one, says Nānak  
 Comprehends the Path of God.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Nānak, *Vār Sārang*, p. 1245.

When Gurū Nānak went to Koḍikulam, the place which the *Janam Sākhīs* call Tilāngī, the Nāthpañthīs were collecting and storing in their *Bhaṇḍārās*, what the people were offering them, but Gurū Nānak was distributing what was offered to them. Gurū Nānak stood for the doctrine of *Waṇḍ-Chhakṇā*. When he explained it to the Yogīs, they offered a linseed and asked Bābā Nānak to distribute it to all. Gurū Nānak grinded it, dissolved it in water and distributed it. Yogī Maṅgal Nāth, the leader was profoundly impressed.

"Conserving wealth for oneself is to make die of hunger. It is a life of distribution and not of 'possession' that the Gurū presents to humanity. Hoarding is vice, eating by the sweat of one's brow is virtue. Living and letting others live in reasonable enjoyment of each one's own individual life of home and country is, what the Gurū thinks should be the principal tendency of man's rule over his fellow-men."<sup>7</sup> *Kirt Karnī* is, "to toil for one's bread, for goodness."<sup>8</sup> Begging for one's food is not sanctified in Sikhism as it is for Monks in some other religions.

#### WORSHIP, PRAYER, MEDITATION IN SIKH RELIGION

In Sikhism worship, prayer, meditation, whether individual or corporate are one and the same thing. The same hymns for which there is an open choice are used for each function. Worship is prayer and prayer is worship. Prayer is contemplation and contemplative prayer is a meditation, leading to ecstasy and enlightenment. The purpose of all prayers and meditations is to see the nearness and the vision of God's Presence and Light.

Corporate worship in association and companionship of

saintly souls is considered very important for spiritual life. As Evelyn Underhill puts it, "Corporate worship, stands for the total orientation of life towards God."<sup>9</sup> In Sikhism no special liturgical action is required for it. The congregation sings together, prays and worships together, eats together and participates in all religious, social and cultural activities of serving others collectively. Money, labour of love, dedicated service flows in, and historic shrines are built, roads and bridges are constructed and hospitals or educational services are organized.

#### THE SIKH CONCEPT OF RELIGION

In Sikhism, man is the source of spirituality, society is the centre of moral and creative action, and God is the end of all religious effort. The object of Sikhism as a way of life is to create a spiritual kinship and unity between man and God, and between man and society, be he a Hindu, Muslim, Christian or a Jew. "All men are equal at social level, and on all God bestows His grace and bounty without discrimination." The aim of Sikhism is to help the seeker of truth to discover within himself the light of perfection, and the power of immanence, and realize God not only in sublime mystical experiences, but in the very life and existence of humanity. For a Sikh this world is not an illusion, nor a vale of sorrow from which man must run away, but the very earth on which man lives, is a temple of righteous actions: *dhartī daramsāl*. This world is the abode of Truth and the True One resides in it. The Sikh Gurūs did not believe in any abstract and bloodless mysticism, but in a wide awake spirituality of healthy, social, cultural and political wisdom.

"Gurū Nānak's religion," says Barth, "stood distinguished from the sectarian schools in general by the simplicity and spiritualistic character of its worship, and especially by its moderation in regard to mythology."<sup>10</sup> From the very outset, the great distinguishing quality of Sikhism has been its reconciliation with secular life.

Estlin Carpenter rightly comments, "Starting with a puritan quietism, which repudiated outward rites, as in themselves meritorious, and conceived the life of the believer as a continued communion with God, it developed temple and service, and observances of ceremonial piety. Rejecting every kind of violence and enjoying the complete forgiveness of wrongs, it protected itself by military organization, made disciples into warriors and turned the devotee into soldier saint. It announced religion in the broadest terms, broke down all barriers of caste and race, and then imposed the obligation of the sword with a rite of initiation, which drew the tightest of limits around the semi-national Church fellowship."<sup>11</sup>

Duncan Greenlees in his learned exposition of Sikhism, *The Gospel of Gurū Granth Sāhib* says, "The Sikh is not a Hindu or a Muslim; he is the disciple of the One Eternal Gurū of the world, and all who learn from Him are truly Sikhs and must not corrupt His teaching with the confused utterances of men who live among them and around. Sikhism is not disguised Hindu sect, but an independent revelation of the One Truth of all sects; it is no variant of Muslim teachings, save in that, it too proclaims the love of God and the need for men to hold Him always in their heart. It too is a distinct religion like the other great religions of the world."<sup>12</sup> In the opinion of Professor Arnold Toynbee, "The Sikh religion might be described, not inaccurately, as a vision of Hindu-Muslim common ground. To have discovered and embraced the deep harmony underlying the historic Hindu-Muslim discord has been a noble spiritual triumph; and the Sikhs may well be proud of their religion's ethos and origin."<sup>13</sup>

#### GOD AND NATURE

Like Judaism and Islām, Sikhism insists on the Unicity of God. The One-Self-Existent God created the Universe and governs it. A day will come when all religions will unite in the worship of One God. "There is but One God, "but the Hindus and Muslims think

that their God is different from the God of other religions. The One God whom I worship is both Allāh and Rāma; to the Formless one I bow in my heart. Thus I have settled the dispute between Hindus and Muslims."<sup>14</sup>

Admitting freedom of worship for all, the Gurūs ridiculed representation of gods through idolatry: "Those who consider stone-images to be God, their worship is wasted," says the Gurū. "Those who fall at the feet of stone idols, their prayers and services are futile. My God ever speaks to me and He hears my prayers. He bestows gifts on His devotees. The stone-image neither speaks nor gives anything."

God is described in the Sikh Scriptures through His Essence attributes. God alone is self-existent. Everything and everyone derives his being from His Being. All things receive existence from Him. Nothing could or would exist apart from Him and independent of Him. By stressing His self-existence, God placed Himself in opposition to the gods, who have no existence and to prophets and *avatāras* among human beings, whose existence depends on His grace and gifts.

God is Infinite, Eternal and Absolute. He is in no way subject to change and dissolution, as are all material things. He is Spirit and Light. God can neither be compared with anything outside Himself, nor can the human mind comprehend Him. In the vision of the prophets and mystical geniuses, God has always revealed Himself as Eternal Light. Perfect vision is the vision of God's Light and Beauty.

God manifested His Omnipotence by calling the world into existence. God is Omnipotent because He has the power to invest the content of His Will with reality, and the whole realm of His existence is constantly sustained by His activity.

The Sikh Gurūs do not believe in a God who lives in Heaven. He is wholly free from spatial limitations. His Omnipresence expresses the truth that the Being of God is not separable from His activity. He pervades everything and makes His working felt

everywhere. The Omniscience of God works in creation, which is conditioned by His Will:

*ghaṭ ghaṭ ke aṅtar kī jānat*

*bhale bure kī pīr pachānat.*

God knows the inmost thoughts of every soul,

And feels the distress of good and evil men,

From a tiny ant to a huge elephant

God takes delight in bestowing mercy on every creature.

*Dasam Granth*, Gurū Gobind Singh, *Kabio-bāch Benī Chaupāī*, 11, p. 1387.

God as the Creator is also the Preserver, the source of value. God is not indifferent to values and to the sufferings of the virtuous and good people. He is moved by the love and devotion of man. He protects His saints and prophets from dangers, unless He wills that their suffering and martyrdom should serve a higher purpose.

The divine Attribute, which more than any other serves as a foundation of man's trust and faith in God, is God's love for the righteous man. "If man goes one step towards Him," says Bhāī Gurdās, "the Lord comes a thousand steps towards man." God's love is not an act, but a principle of all acts. It is because of this love, present in every being as a creative principle, that the whole world is tense with one immense aspiration, quickening and unifying, and drawing everyone towards the Eternal Beloved. In the love of God all other loves are rooted:

*hazār takhāfi muraṣā,*

*fitādah dar rāhi aṅd.*

On the path of Love,

Lies the glory of a thousand thronès,

The Seekers of Truth care not

For jewels, crowns or kingdoms.

Transient are these precious things of the world,

Deem them no lovers,

Who know not the mystery of love.

Bhāi Nañd Lāl, *Dīwān-i-Goyā*, 27.

God's mercy is inexhaustible. His anger is but for a moment, but His Loving kindness endures for ever. There is no end to God's love. Alongside His loving kindness, there always stands His justice. Before creating the Universe, God alone existed in His transcendent state. Out of His own Absolute Being, God created Nature, the indwelling spirit of creation:

*āpīnai āpū sājio āpīnai rachio nāu.*

*duyī qudrafi sājīai harī āsanū dītho chāu.*

God created Himself

And assumed a Name

Second besides Himself,

He created Nature.

Seated in Nature, He watches

With delight what He creates.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Nānak, *Āsā dī Vār* 1:4, p. 463.

*Qudrafi takhatū rachāiā*

*Sachī niberañhāro.*

Nature is His Throne, created for Himself,

From here, He dispenses justice in the light of Truth.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*,

Gurū Nānak, *Vadhañs (Alāhmā)*, p. 580.

#### THE WILL OF GOD: *HUKM*

Both Arabic terms, *ḥukm* or *amar*, taken from *Kor'ān* mediate between the Creator and the Creation and make them inseparable. The Will of God is also identified with the wisdom and Word of God. This Divine Will is the heart of Nature, and he who can commune with the heart of Nature, understands His Will, His Law. To abide by the Will of God is to live in *raḏā (riḏā)*, another term borrowed from Islāmic mysticism. To live in *raḏā* is to live in dedicated submission. Even the most unfavourable

circumstances of life are regarded under *raṣā* as divine manifestation of His Majesty (*jalāl*) and splendour (*jamāl*).

#### MAN AND SOCIETY

Gurū Nānak presents man in his totality, man projected into existence, being-in-the-spirit and being in the world, man in the midst of multiplicity, yet bearing within himself the sign and yearning for unity with the whole. Gurū Nānak thus breaks away and stands apart from the Hindu-Buddhist-Jain tradition, and counsels man against realizing his transcendence apart from society. Not only does he separate man from society, but he recognizes that man cannot achieve his transcendence, save through humanity, and he cannot realize the significance of his Being, save with communion with the Divine Being. Though men are separate, they are communicating elements of the whole. They cannot deny the value of their mutual transcendence with respect to one another, nor their communion with the Whole.

According to Gurū Nānak, "the Divine Spirit which is in the universe is also to be found in the human body, and he who seeks, will find it. God has reflected the whole Cosmos in the human body. The body is the temple of God."<sup>15</sup>

#### MAN WAS NOT BORN FREE

##### HE IS BORN TO BE FREE

Living in the sensible world, the world of material and social reality, man has to move towards the ethical world of the spirit and abide the light and principle of life. "The path is narrow and sharp as a sword's edge." The keynote of the social and political philosophy of Gurū Nānak is intense belief in equality of all human beings, and the right of all human beings to be free from fear, oppression, social slavery and political tyranny. In his boyhood Gurū Nānak revolted against caste system and all the sectarian ceremonies and laws of the Hindu Code that differentiated man from man on the basis of birth, class or lineage. He demolished the barriers not only between high and low caste

people, but removed the cultural and religious barriers between Hindus and Muslims. He rejected the four-fold order of Hindu society and considered it highly dangerous for the progress of Indian society and culture. The sin of untouchability, now fast disappearing, was a degrading prejudice, and he fought it everywhere with scathing criticism. For the first time in India, men and women of all faiths, castes and creeds could sit together in a row: *paṅgat*, and eat in the common kitchen of the Gurūs: *Laṅgar*.

The social world which Gurū Nānak was seeking to create, was a world of complete understanding between man and man, between people and people, a world of realistic and positive thinking. His keen mind, free from all ancestral prejudices, led him to open a new road for Indian society and build a new social order. All superstitions and caste prejudices melted like ice under the rays of Gurū Nānak's wisdom.

#### FREEDOM AND EQUALITY

Gurū Nānak allowed much more freedom to women in Sikh society than even the freedom enjoyed by women in western society six decades ago. In Sikhism woman is considered to be "*ardh-sarīrī, mokh duārī*: half of the man and the gateway of salvation." Of Course, the Gurūs made it clear that only virtuous women (*Suchajhī*) are enlightened better half. Evil-minded women (*Kuchajhī*) can be curse to life and society; so also wicked men bring disaster to family and society.

A householder's life is purposeful if the parents do not shirk their responsibility towards their children, and the children are disciplined in filial piety towards their parents. Sikh women have played a great part in history of the Sikhs. When Gurū Gobīnd Singh was young the administration of the Gurū's *darbār* was conducted by his mother, Mātā Gujarī. After the death of Baṇḍā Singh Bahādur, for nearly two decades the Sikh community was guided by Gurū Gobīnd Singh's wife Mātā Suṇḍarī and the Holy Mother of the Khālsā, Mātā Sāhib Devī. We have quoted letters of



these women of Sikh history indicating that they guided and maintained contacts with the Sikhs of far flung areas like Pākpaṭṭan, Paṭnā and Dāccā.

Reacting to the critical situation of his times, Gurū Nānak wrote, "Every beggar aspires to be a king. Every blockhead sets up as a Puṇḍit. The blind man pretends to be connoisseur of gems. The hypocrite sets up as a spiritual leader."<sup>16</sup> The situation is the same now a days in many countries, but the pattern is different. The fundamental lesson of freedom, which the Gurūs taught was, "Fear no one and strike fear in no one."<sup>17</sup>

Gurū Nānak reversed all prevalent concepts of sovereignty and kingship by saying: *takhṭī bahai takhṭātai kī lāik*: "He alone must sit on the throne, who is fit to rule."<sup>18</sup> "Call not those power-hungry men kings, who die fighting for dominions."<sup>19</sup> "A Ruler deserves to be on the throne by virtue of his noble qualities. Outstanding traits in him should be reverence and fear of the collective will of the assembly of the enlightened."<sup>20</sup>

Gurū Gobind Singh not only inspired his humblest disciples with super-human powers by bestowing on them the wisdom of the Word, the sovereignty and sword of absolute freedom, but he disciplined the Sikhs in the democratic spirit and glorified them as his Master. For him, the people inspired by true spirituality and wisdom were the prophets of the future, and he was the first to point out in world history that the fate of future civilizations was not in the hands of mighty individuals, but in the hands of morally and spiritually awake nations. Long before Rousseau spoke of the voice of the people, Gurū Gobind Singh glorified the people and established democratic principles and traditions in his writings:

*Judh jīte inhī ke prasāḍī*  
*inhī ke prasāḍī su dān kare.*

All the battles I have won against tyranny,  
I have fought with the devoted backing of these people.  
Through them only, I have been able to bestow gifts.  
Through their help, I have escaped harm.



The Sikh Concept of Welfare of All : *Sarbat dā Bhalla* Bhairi Kanhiyā in action. Serving water to the wounded soldiers of the enemy.



The Love and generosity of the Sikhs  
 Have enriched my heart and home.  
 Through their grace, I have attained all learning.  
 Through their help in battle, I have slain my enemies.  
 From head to foot, whatever I call my own,  
 All I possess or carry, I dedicate to these people.

*Dasam Granth, Gurū Gobind Singh, Śabad.2, p.716*

"The spirit of the people." said Gurū Gobind Singh, "is the spirit of God. When anyone causes suffering to the people, God's wrath falls on him." Never before in Indian history, had social consciousness been awakened so deeply and so profoundly as was done by the Sikh Gurūs from Gurū Nānak to Gurū Gobind Singh. The Gurūs gave to the Sikhs a unique slogan: *Degh Tegh Fateh*: Victory to the Sword of Freedom and Victory to the food for all, symbolized by cauldron: *deghe*.

#### THE GURŪ: THE PERFECT PROPHET

In Hindu society and religion, the word, "gurū" is used invariably for a Brāhmin, a *Sannyāsin*, a Yogic Teacher, and even a school teacher. "The Gurū," in Sikhism is a perfect prophet or messenger of God, in whom the Light of God shines fully, visibly and completely. He is not God and should not be worshipped as God, but he is as perfect and sinless as God. "The mysteries of God and His creation are known either to God or to the Gurū." The true Gurū is the true instrument of His Will and is commissioned by God to reveal His Truth to humanity. God revealed Himself in the most extraordinary manner through the Gurūs. God revealed Himself clearly and perfectly to the Gurūs, and the Gurūs revealed God to humanity through their Word and Personality. The Gurū is now present in the Congregation of the *Khālsā*, in the Word of His Scriptures:

*Satigurū pūrā je milai pārai ratanū bichārū.  
 manū dijai gur āpne pārai sarb piārū.*

Those who encounter the Gurū,  
 Achieve an indestructible love of God.  
 The Gurū bestows divine knowledge,  
 And unveils the mysteries of the three worlds.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Nānak, Srī Rāga, p. 59.*

#### THE WORD OF GOD: ŚĀBAD OR THE NAME

The word *Śabad* means Unstruck Music, which is the life force of the universe. It is this Creative Word *Śabad*, which directs the cosmic process towards its destiny directed by His Will. It is the germinative principle of Divine Light. *Śabad* is also the ground of inner life, the inner treasure of wisdom. The *Śabad* is also identified with the eternal Wisdom of the Gurū and His mystic personality. "The Word is the Gurū. In the Gurū, the Light of Divine word shines." "Without the Gurū's grace we cannot burn to nothingness the ashes of self-love, for the Gurū kindles in the human hearts the fire of the love of God." The Word (*Śabad*) is the attributeless personality of the Gurū.

#### KARMA AND FREE WILL

The fact that man suffers for his bad deeds, or is rewarded for his good deeds inevitably leads to the theory of *karma*. In Sikhism, the law of karma according to which we reap what we sow is not inexorable. The burden of our sins, the taint of karma, the weight of all the past can be thrown off by diving deeper into truth, by leading a purer and nobler life and above all by the grace of God. Human life is an opportunity for man to rise to immortal heights or fall into the pit. There is no determinism in our fate, if we rise above the level of Nature. At the level of our animal nature, we no doubt reap what we sow, but at the moral and spiritual level of existence, man breaks all bonds of past karma. The Master says, "Countless sins of the past life are washed away by the illumination of the Word." "The Gurū's Word erases the blot of thousands of evil deeds of the past, and the greatest sinner can become the greatest saint."<sup>21</sup>

## RITES AND CEREMONIES

Every religion has some special ceremonies of birth, marriage, death, baptism or seeking God's protection and grace during difficulties and sufferings. Though apparently the ceremonies are different, basically only one and the same ceremony is performed. Either a continuous reading of *Ādi Gurū Granth* by a team of readers, which may include men, women, family members (*Akhaṇḍ Pāth*) or a slow periodic reading completed by one or two readers within seven or ten days (*Sahaj Pāth*), is the primary ceremony in all cases. At the time of marriage, four hymns of Gurū Rām Dās (*Lāvān*), written to celebrate the mystic union of human soul as the Bride and God as the Bridegroom are sung and read. Other hymns can be sung by the Hymn Singers (*Rāgīs*), for which they have free choice, but must represent the communion of soul and God. At the time of death, a few hymns about the transience of life and death are sung, for which the singers have a free and wide choice. No fixed liturgical verses are sung. The Bed-Time prayer (*Kīrtan Sohilā*) which is recited when the sun sets, is also recited when the sun of life has set.

Gurū Amār Dās's *Anandū*, the 'Song of Spiritual Bliss', is sung after all ceremonies of birth, marriage and death. The same *Ardāsa* (Invocational Prayer) is recited after each ceremony and Sacramental Food (*Kaṛāh Praśād*) is distributed. The ceremonies can be performed by trained priests or by any adult; man or woman who knows how to perform the ceremony, and is a religious man. He may be a 'Singh' or a *Sahajdhārī* Sikh. In *Siṁdhī Gurdwārās* these ceremonies of the *Khālsā Panth* are performed by *Sahajdhārīs* with far more devotion and accuracy in words and deeds than in ordinary Sikh *Gurdwārās*, where prayers are conducted by careless and worldly minded 'Singhs'.

## THE RIDDLE OF BIRTH AND DEATH

In the Sikh Scriptures reflection on death are found always

associated with birth, and the words *janam* (birth) and *maran* (death) generally occur together. This is because the mystery of death cannot be understood without knowing the human and spiritual purpose of birth in this world. Man is given sufficient free will to be responsible for his destiny and fate within the life span of birth and death, but the Unknown before birth and after death is God; the Sovereign of both the apparently dark ends of human life: *dohān siriān kā swāmī*. Before sending us into this world as human beings, God gave us a purpose and direction, which was ingrained in our consciousness. Wordsworth rightly talks of the dim recollections of these intimations of immortality which the child, according to the Sikh Scriptures, vividly remembers in the womb of the mother and during his infancy.

Man is not born in sin, as some would have us believe, but he is born in God's grace. Sin only leads to birth and death in lower lives of animal existence, while God's grace gives the soul an opportunity to become a god in flesh. Human birth is something which even the angels covet, because it is only as human beings that we can rise to the perfection of the Ultimate Being. While the mystery of the Unknown before birth and after death baffles man, God has not left this mystery unveiled. In different ages and in different climes he has sent prophets on this earth, who have not only unveiled this mystery and created an unending yearning for immortality, but have left Divine Wisdom enough to exalt men to a vision, which can conquer not only human frailty, but also death.

According to the divine revelation and the mystical vision of Gurū Nānak, "What is in the universe is also found in the human body and he who seeks will find it," and, "Such is the divine play of the Creator that he has reflected the whole Cosmos in the human body."<sup>22</sup> It is within an enlightened mind and heart that the Cosmos is evaluated, and existence and Being are revealed in the full splendour of Divine Majesty. This is the metaphysical basis of the Gurū's teachings about death and immortality. It is at the root of this divine certitude that man is in a position constantly to assert

that each man can recognize in every other the fact of human transcendence:

*sāgar mehī boond, boond mehī sāgarū  
kavanūi bujhai bidhī jānai.*

The drop of water is in the sea,  
And the sea is in the drop of water,  
Who shall solve the riddle?  
The Word leads to inner concentration,  
And concentration leads to divine Wisdom,  
This is the riddle of the divine Word.  
The eternal Light dwells in human mind,  
And human mind is the emanation of the Light,  
Our five senses become the disciples of Light.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Nānak, Rāga Rāmkalī, pp. 878-79.*

Man is not born free, but he is born to be free. Those who lack spiritual consciousness are helpless victims of their own instincts and wild cravings, and they drift away from truth. He who lives the life of contemplation, will be blessed with inner illumination. The white man and the black man, the heathen and the Negro, the saint and the wicked, the rich and the poor, are all moulded out of the same fundamental elements and infused with the same Divine Spark of Life, and are looked after and sustained by the same God. Religions may differ, but the human elements in man do not differ anywhere or at any time. God, the Ultimate Truth, is ever the same:

*māṭī ek sagal saṁsārā.  
bahūi bidhī bhāṇḍe ghaṛai kumāhrā.*

All men are moulded out of the same clay,  
The Great Potter has merely varied the shapes of them,  
All men are mixed of the same five elements,  
No one can make any elements less in one, more in another,  
Man is born in chains,  
Without meeting the True Gurū,



He cannot attain liberation.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Amar Dās, *Rāga Bhairu*, p.1128.

Long is the night of life which is spent in egoistic indifference to truth, in reckless ignorance of righteousness, justice and wisdom. Short is the day in which man toils and suffers for Trust, Beauty and Love. The face of Eternal Truth and Eternal Life is hid as it were under a golden lid. The purpose of life is to open this lid and visualize this Truth beyond birth and death.

#### MORTAL MAN AND IMMORTALITY

A Yiddish proverb says, "Everyone knows he must die, but no one believes it." Man lives in conscious ignorance of death. He can think of life and its urge for immortality, but does not stop to think that the silence and darkness of death broods over all. It is death which gives meaning and purpose of life. It is death which makes man think whether he will end up in the grave or be immortal. "Blessed is he, who has always the hour of death before his eyes and everyday disposes himself to die" People are generally so absorbed in the present attractions of life that they never care to think of death. Death pounces on them, sweeping down on heedless man like a bird of prey:

*ājū kālī phunī tohī grāsī hai  
samajhī rākhū chīfī.*

Death is at large O Friend.

Like a blood-thirsty beast,

Ready to devour any prey.

Bear it in mind and never forget,

It will pounce on you some day

Contemplate the Lord, says Nānak,

Life's precious years are passing away.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Gurū Tegh Bahādur, *Rāga Sorath*, p.631.

Though destined for immortal life, the soul of man is trapped

in false belief that the body is his self. Clinging to the perishable things of the world, he shares their fate and is subject to mortality, the victim of his sins, and is dragged again and again into physical birth by his own deluded choice. This must go on until by God's grace, the Divine Teacher awakens in him the purifying love for God, which destroys his egoism and sets him free from all illusion. Bodily death is common to all who take the body, but it cannot affect God's lovers who dwell not in their ego but at the Feet of God, spending their lives in continuous memory of Him and self-identification with His Will.

The pleasure of the world, for a time, distract the seeking soul from its age long quest and prevent it from the passionate search within, which would unveil the Hidden One in each heart. So all-absorbing are these worldly delights, worthless though they be, that they leave the soul no time to think of its own needs; the senses are so busy tasting them, that they forget their very function is really to set God on the throne within the soul. So the soul forgets God, intoxicating herself with pleasures that turn to misery.

All earthly things are doomed because they are transient and fleeting. They will perish. All friendship and relationships last but for a limited period, and when death calls, the soul must at once leave them behind. All man's wit, wisdom, his bodily charms and strength, his wealth and courtliness, his noble ancestry, his lands and houses remain behind and pass into other hands; the soul must enter the Unseen as naked as it came into the world at birth. Death is always at the doorstep for each one of us, and it becomes us to think how much of that precious Name of God is really treasured in our hearts.

Man can break the mental trappings of the flesh and rise to communion with the Eternal within his soul. Family and friends can be helpers and inspirers, when one seeks their participation in the divine quest. But when he abandons himself to their earthly cravings, they are manacles, chaining his feet to a low type of life.

The world is transitory, but life is immortal. Man's physical existence is mortal, but his Spirit is immortal. Life may move from suffering to wisdom and peace, or it may fall from the pinnacle of sensuous pleasures into the pit of sorrow and death.

#### FEAR OF DEATH AND FEAR OF GOD

"The first duty of man is that of subduing fear," says Thomas Carlyle, "We must get rid of fear, we cannot act at all till then." The fear of death is the greatest fear. Whoever acquires calm fearlessness in the face of death, attains godliness. The eminent Ṣūfī Dhu'n-Nūn al-Miṣrī sums up the situation thus:

Fear wasted me,  
Yearning consumed me,  
Love beguiled me,  
God revived me.

And yet the Sikh Scriptures stress the need of fear of God, and clearly distinguish it from the other fears. It is this fear that destroys all fear. This fear of God is in essence awe and reverence of God, and it has in it a moral direction towards achieving dynamic powers of fearlessness that knows not any other fear. It is the fear that dispels all fears:

*bhai tanī aganī bhakhai bhai nālī.*

*bhai bhau gharīai sabadī swārī.*

Entertain in the heart the fear of the Lord;  
Through the fear of the Lord, all other fears are conquered.  
Of what merit is any fear  
That leads not to fearlessness,  
But to other and worse fears?

There is no other place of sanctuary, O Lord but Thyself;  
Nothing can come to pass but what Thou ordained;  
What fear should we then have except the fear of the Lord?  
All other fears are but phantoms

Of the mind, too much attached to worldly things.

Violence, worldly love, greed and pride  
Are insatiate like a restless river.  
Unless the fear of God is thy food and drink,  
Unless the fear of God is thy whole sustenance,  
Degradation and death are thy lot.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Nānak, Rāga Guārī Guārērī, p.151.*

Fear inspired by terror and lower cravings and passions is the anticipation of evil and pain, as contrasted with love and hope which anticipates the good. Awe, on the other hand is the sense of wonder and humility inspired by the sublime or felt in the presence of mystery. Fear at the earthly and material level of sensuous desires leads to helplessness of reason and will, while the holy fear of God is the acquisition of insight and higher morality. Gurū Tegh Bahādur identifies the fearless with the highest spiritual state of divine illumination:

*bhai kākū kau det nahī  
nahī bhai mānat ān.*

He who fears no one,  
Nor strikes fear in anyone,  
Consider my mind, says Nānak,  
Such a man to be Enlightened Sage.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Tegh Bahādur, Sloka. 16, p.1427.*

A clear direction is given by Gurū Tegh Bahādur here. A Sikh should neither fear any human power, nor strike any fear in any fellow man under any circumstances. The mind and soul of a man who lives like a coward under the oppressive authority of some ruthless ruler will degenerate into a submissive and crushed spirit, incapable of clear thinking and acting according to the dictates of his conscience. To conquer fear is to conquer greed and death. But there is a type of fearlessness, which is associated with brute force and cruelty. Men with a dead conscience also act fearlessly, but this

apparent fearlessness springs from callous ruthlessness. But a God-fearing man is compassionate, conscious of his inward strength, courage, energy of purpose, and is unshaken in his faith and conviction in Truth and Justice. He conquers the minds and hearts of others through compassion, charity, understanding and love. Such a man is illumined with divine knowledge, and is a philosopher, scholar and sage in the true sense of the word.

#### DIVINE RECKONING AND JUDGEMENT

Many people are not able to reconcile the belief in a good and righteous God with the facts of life as they see them. Why do the wicked prosper? Why is God silent in times of disaster? The ultimate plan of God is not revealed in the happenings of a few years. Men sometimes have to wait to know what the final outcome will be? Sometimes one evil destroys another evil. Truth ultimately triumphs and lives even if it has to pass through severe tests of suffering. Evil may prosper for some time, but it is ultimately doomed. The just shall live in the protection and sanctuary of God.

God, the Indwelling Spirit, whose light resides in every heart as the living conscience (*añtarjāmī*) judges every soul after death, taking account of every human action, thought, feeling and desire, and giving a judicious and righteous return for all. All sins meet their ultimate chastisement sometimes in this world, but positively after death. Deeds of merit bear their fruit. There is absolutely perfect reckoning and reward of man's deeds: "*Othai sache hī sachī nibrai*: There everything is judged in the light of ultimate Truth."<sup>23</sup> There is no partiality and no favouritism. No matter how powerful a man is on earth, in the Presence of God the sinner finds no escape. The Deity who Judges is called *Dharam Rāj*, *Azrāil* (the king of Righteousness) and is conceived to be an Omniscient Power of God created by him to serve the ends of Justice, but he is not God. Gurū Nānak in his well-known composition *Āsā dī Vār* says:

*paṛiā hovai gunahgārū tā omī sādhiū na māṛiai.*

*jehā ghālē ghālñā tevehō nāu pachāṛiai.*

Abandoning himself to wanton pleasures,

Man is doomed to lie in dust;

When from his body his spirit departs.

He who becomes a great man of the world,

With chains around his neck is led,

And for his transgressions, he is tried.

After death he faces the reckoning of his deeds,

From punishment of his sins he finds no escape,

No one then listen to his woeful cries,

The spiritually blind wastes his precious life.

A scholar who sins will not be spared,

An unlettered saint will not be ensnared,

The scholar as well as the unlettered man

Will be judged by his deeds in His Court,

The self-willed and the boastful ones

Will suffer agonizing blows.

If a burglar breaks into a house

And offers stolen property to a Brāhmin

As charity in the name of his ancestors,

Even in heaven it will be deemed

As nothing but stolen property.

It will bring shame and curse on the thief's race.

Even the Brāhmin who in greed,

Accepts stolen money as offering,

Would lose his very hands,

Such would be divine Justice.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Nānak,*

*Āsā di Vār, 3:3, 12:5, 17:1 pp. 469-70.*

Those who become great and powerful through exploitation, sin and social crimes will not go unpunished by God. Man-made laws helped them in their evil designs, but the ultimate Justice of God will chastise them for their misdeeds. In the world they could

escape by bribery and corrupt practices, but in the Presence of God and on the day of reckoning, there will be no escape. For every crime against humanity and for every sin committed, a just punishment is given by the Dispenser of Justice. Violence against God, against Nature and against humanity is severely punished. All the hateful species of panderers and seducers who call evil good and good evil, darkness light and light darkness, and who have prostituted the things of God for gold and silver and made his earth a den of thieves, are dragged to the flaming tortures of hell and punished. Scholars who are sinners are not favoured for their knowledge. Charity given out of wealth that is stolen or amassed from exploitation of the poor is not acceptable to God. It is not charity, and God punishes those who suck the blood of others and acquire social and political positions.

The concept of a Just and Omnipotent God demands that God will ultimately judge the deeds of every man justly. The Sikh Gurūs did not believe that the dead will remain in the grave till the end of the world. The day of reckoning comes to every man immediately after death, and judgement based on Truth will be pronounced on everyone. Everyone suffers for his own deeds. Crimes collectively committed may have the same punishment, but the day of punishment may still be different. No one suffers for the sins of his kith and kin. Postmortem judgment means God's ultimate assertion of his sovereignty over his creatures. "The King of Death shall chastise him who has not cast down his self-will." But the King of Death is the friend and servant of those, who have attained enlightenment through the Word. "Those who have been liberated by His grace, escape the punishment of their sins: the King of Death tears the scrolls of their evil deeds."<sup>24</sup>

#### HEAVEN AND HELL

Hell and heaven are states of mind and not geographical localities in time and place. They are symbolically represented by joy and sorrow, bliss and agony, light and fire. There is no such thing in

Sikhism as eternal damnation or an everlasting pit of fire created by a revengeful God. Hell is the corrective experience through lower lives, in which the hardened core of the ego of wicked people suffers in a continuous cycle of births and deaths in lower animals. God has given complete freedom and moral choice to man to prefer hell to heaven and to prefer divine love to both hell and heaven:

*hukam kīe manī bhāvde  
rāhī bīrai agai jāvnā.*

Man does what he wills in this world,  
But straight is the path ahead which he must tread;  
When a sinner is driven naked to the pit of hell  
He looks horrible in his shame,  
One has to repent for his sins and misdeeds.

*Ādi Gurū Granth,*

*Gurū Nānak, Āsā dī Vār, 14:3. pp. 470-71.*

Hell is pictured symbolically as an intense and agonizing experience, which proves ultimately the indestructible nature of personality. Sikh religion and mysticism rise to the heights of disinterestedness, and are free from the fear of hell, or craze for joy and paradise.

#### REBIRTH AND TRANSMIGRATION

The fact that man suffers for his bad deeds, or is rewarded for good ones, leads to the theory of karma. In Sikhism, the law of Karma, according to which we reap what we sow, is not inexorable. The burden of our sins, the taint of all past karma can be thrown off by diving deeper into truth, by leading a pure and noble life and above all by the grace of God. Human life is an opportunity to rise to immortal heights or fall into the pit.

In Sikhism there are two distinct doctrines which come into the category of rebirth. When the soul passes from one human life to another in its moral and spiritual progress, it goes on acquiring



human births till it acquires *nirvāṇa*. Such a rebirth is called reincarnation and is a blessing and gift of God. It means that God out of his infinite mercy has given us one more chance to fulfil an ultimate destiny, and the seeker of Truth cries out when he is at his Door, "For many lives I have been separated from Thee, O Beloved. This life is dedicated to Thee and Thy Love." Every man can cut asunder the bonds of birth and death during human life and attain perfection. The hope is extended by the Sikh Gurūs to the lowliest of the low, to every human being living on the planet, no matter what his status, colour of skin or nationality and race.

Rebirth in the descending order is a punishment and a curse. The soul passes from lower and lower moral life as human being to rebirth in animal life and suffers untold agonies. Like a beast of burden he carries the load of his sins without any opportunity to get out of his present predicament. This is transmigration: *āvāgavanī*, literally, coming and going.

#### SPIRITUAL REBIRTH: DEATH AND LIFE

Says Gurū Arjan, "First accept death, give up all aspiration to lead a worldly life; be humble as dust of everyone's feet and then come to me to be my disciple."<sup>25</sup> "If you wish to play the game of love" says Gurū Nānak, "come to the lane leading to my Faith with your head on the palm of your hand. While treading on this path, be not afraid to sacrifice your head."<sup>26</sup>

This path is described as "narrower than a hair's breadth and sharper than a sword's edge."<sup>27</sup> A Sikh is expected to walk on this path with the spirit of martyrdom:

*murdā hoi murīd na galī hovṇā.*  
*sābarī sidakī sahīdī bharm bhau khovṇā.*  
 Dead to the world,  
 A Sikh lives in the Spirit of the Gurū.  
 A man does not become a Sikh  
 By merely paying lip service to him.  
 A Sikh dispels all doubts and fears,

And lives a life of deep patience and faith,  
Verily, he is a living martyr.

Bhāi Gurdās, *Vār. 3, Pauṛī. 18.*

“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord” (*Rev.* 14:13). Rightly are they called the blessed dead, for they remain continually dead to themselves and immersed beyond their own nature in the gladdening unity of God. This death of blessedness has little to do with physical dissolution; it is the letting go, the laying down, one by one of all the desires that seek their gratification in separateness from him. One by one these shackles have to be broken, the attraction disowned, and the illusions swept away. To die in the spirit of the Gurū is also to be called to die in the spirit of Word of God, because the Word of God is the Ultimate Teacher. Gurū Amar Dās says, “*Sabadī marai soī janī sījhai*: He who dies in the Word attains the fruit of realization. Without the Word none can be saved.”<sup>28</sup>

#### IMMORTALITY AND THE VISION OF GOD

In his strivings after perfection and in his efforts to dispose himself for the flooding in of mystical graces, the soul of the Sikh passes through a number of mystical states and moral conditions. Through moral and spiritual purification the soul journey from one state of illumination to a still higher one until he reaches the Unitive State. Each state (*ātmik avasthā*) is the end of a part and beginning of a new future. A Sikh mystic leaves rapture and ecstasy far behind to reach the goal, which is identification of the human will with Divine Will. In this state God is there in the soul and the soul is in God. The five stages through which it passes are called: (i) the region of divine righteousness: *dharam khand*; (ii) the region of divine illumination: *gīan khand*; (iii) the region of spiritual Beauty and Modesty: *saram khand*; (iv) the region of Grace: *karam khand*; (v) the region of Truth and Light of God: *sach khandū*. Bhagat Ravīdās describes the last realm in his following hymn:

*Begam purā sahar ko nāu.*

*dūkhū andohū nahī tihi thāu.*

Realm of no-woes is the name of the city,

There is no sorrow or grief in that place;

There is no vexing harassment of tax-gatherers,

There is no fear or sense of sin,

Nor is there any terror or deceit.

I have now acquired a beautiful homeland,

There is everlasting peace and goodness my friend.

The sovereignty of divine Spirit ever prevails here.

There is no second, nor third, only the One Eternal is here.

The City is ever so well-known.

There the spiritually rich and affluent reside,

Who are prosperous and live in the richness of divine Wisdom.

With full freedom they wander here where they

Of the inner apartment of the divine Palace

Do not obstruct or hinder their movements,

Says Ravīdās, the liberated Cobbler,

He who becomes a citizen of my homeland,

Wins my esteem as my honoured friend.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*, Bhagat Ravīdās, *Rāga Gaurī*, p. 345.

This is how man conquers death through the discipline of Sikhism, and becomes liberated. He thus achieves immortality while he is yet in mortal frame. Through Truth he visualizes Truth and lives with Truth. "Thus the Lord's Elect (*Pañc*) are accepted and embraced in his Presence. The pain of birth and fear of death is broken. They have attained the Imperishable Lord. Great honour is theirs in all regions." And so the soul rise, climbing the five steps of the ladder of spiritual effort to his real home. By the faithful and brave execution of his duty on death, he earns the right to knowledge and wisdom, and so is enabled to make happy efforts in the helping of others. By this means he wins the grace of the Gurū and so is led by him to union with the Beloved, whom

he has sought so long as the Ultimate Truth.

#### DEATH CEREMONY

(i). At the death-bed of a Sikh, the relations and friends console themselves and the departing soul by reading Gurū Arjan's *Sukhmanī*: the Radiant Jewel of Peace.

(ii). When death occurs, no loud lamentations are allowed. Instead, the Sikh exclaim *Vāhigurū*, *Vāhigurū*! (Wonderful Lord!).

(iii). All dead bodies, whether those of children or grown-up people, are cremated. Where cremation is not possible, it is permissible to throw the dead body into the sea or a river.

(iv). The dead body is washed and clothed (complete with all the five symbols) before it is taken out on a bier to the cremation ground. The procession starts after a prayer and sings suitable hymns on the way. At the cremation ground, the body is placed on the pyre and the nearest relation light the fire. When the fire is fully ablaze, someone reads *Sohilā* and offers prayer for the benefit of the dead. Then the people come away, and leave the relations of the dead at their door, where they are thanked and dismissed.

The bereaved family, for the comfort of their own souls as well as for the peace of the departed, start a reading of the *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib*, which may be at their own house or at a neighbouring Gurdwārā. Friends and relations take part in it, and after ten days they again come together, when the reading is finished. The usual prayer is offered and *Kaṛāh Parśād* distributed.

(v). The charred bones of the dead together with the ashes are taken from the cremation ground and thrown into the nearest river.

(vi). It is forbidden to erect monuments over the remains of the dead, although monuments in their honour at any other place would be quite permissible.

(vii). The following hymns are usually recited during the funeral procession:<sup>29</sup>

WORLDLY TIES

*sabh kichhū jīvat ko bīvhār.*

*māt pitā bhāī sut bandhap arū phunī grihi kī nārī.*

All worldly ties,

Are only for earthly life;

Be it father, mother, sons or kinsmen,

Or be it even a devoted wife. *Refrain*

As soon as the soul leaves the body,

"Take away this phantom" they cry.

Even for an hour they would not keep it.

Out of the house it is hastily carried away.

Man, reflect in your heart, on its fate,

Consider the earthly creation a mirage.

Says Nānak: Contemplate the Name of God.

Thy soul will be saved by the Lord.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Tegh Bahādur, Rāga Devgandhārī, p.536.*

AWAKE! ARISE!

*Jāg lehū re manā jāg lehū kahā gāfal soīā.*

*Jo tanū upjā sang hī sō bhī sangī na hoīā.*

Awake O man! awake and arise!

Why you sleep in reckless indifference,

The body which was born with you,

Will not accompany thee after death. *Refrain*

Father, mother, sons and friends,

For whom you have deep attachment,

Will throw you in the flames,

As soon as your soul departs.

People pretend to love thee,

They feign to be ever thine,

Only as long as you live in the world,

Awake! Awake! says Nānak; sing His praise;

Like a dream the earthly life will pass away.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Tegh Bahādur, Rāga Tilang, pp. 726-27.*

STRANGE ARE THE WAYS OF THE WORLD

*jagat mai jhūthī dekhī preetī.*

*apne hī sukh siu sabh lāge kiā Dārā kiā māt.*

All earthly love in this world,  
 Have I found to be false;  
 Everyone seeks his own happiness,  
 Be it wife or friend, however fast. *Refrain*  
 Everyone proclaims, "he is mine, he is mine."  
 In life everyone is deeply attached;  
 Friends and dear ones forsake you in death.  
 Strange are the ways of the world.  
 O unwise and indiscreet mind,  
 How oft have I tutored thee,  
 Says Nānak: Life's perilous ocean you can cross,  
 If you sing the praise of the Lord.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Gurū Tegh Bahādur, Rāga Devgandhārī, p.536.*

#### TRANSCIENCE OF WORLDLY JOYS

*ūche maṇdar sāl rasōi.*

*ek ghārī phunī rehanū na hoī*

One may have lofty mansions  
 With large dinning halls;  
 But when he dies, he is not kept  
 In the house, even for a few hours.  
 The body is like a hermitage,  
 Built from grass and straw;  
 The straw is consumed by fire  
 And the ashes mingle with dust. *Refrain*

Brothers, friends and family members;  
 All with one voice exclaim  
 O take him away without delay.

His wife who hitherto was attached  
 To his body, heart and soul  
 Shun him and keeps away from him.  
 Saying: "He is a ghost, a phantom, a spirit.  
 Says Ravidās: Death has ravaged the whole world.  
 I have however escaped this fate  
 By contemplating the Name of God.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Bhagat Ravidās, Rāga Sūhī, p.794.*

GIVE UP ALL THOUGHT OF ME AND MINE

*Jo din āvahī so din jāhī.*

*karnā kūchū rehanū thirū nāhī.*

Everyday that dawns

Swiftly passes away;

We all have to depart from here;

Transient is life on earth.

Our companions are passing away

We too shall have to go from here.

We have to go a long way.

Death loom large on our heads.

Why are you still sleeping in ignorance:

Wake up O simpleton.

You have taken this life in the world

To be real and lasting. *Refrain*

He who has given you human life,

Shall provide you with sustenance.

In every heart God has installed

Stores of vast splendid provisions.

Worship and contemplate the Lord.

Give up all thought of 'me' and 'mine'

Contemplate the Name of God

In your heart every morn.

Precious life is being wasted away.

You have made no preparations for the Journey.

Twilight shadows envelop the sunset of life.

There is pitch darkness all around.

Says Ravidās, O crazy dolt.

Why so you not contemplate God

Life in this world is transient.

*Ādi Gurū Granth, Bhagat Ravidās, Rāga Sūhī, pp. 793-94.*

## HOLY PLACES AND PILGRIMAGE

Lāhore was the capital of Puñjāb for centuries. Yet within thirty

to forty miles of this historic city, the Gurūs founded new cities like Khaḍūr, Goīndwāl, Amritsar, Taran Tāran. Lāhore was the city of *Nawābs*, the rich and the aristocrats. Almost everything was controlled by the government machinery and everything flourished there for the interest of the rulers. The new cities were free from such influences. For long there was no government interference.

Behind the construction of these cities there was one principle. The whole earth is called *Daramsāl*: Temple of God, where man is given all provision of sustenance, and man is born to fulfil one purpose of life; to rise from animal existence to Eternal life and be a citizen, as Bhagat Ravīdās calls it, a citizen of *Begampurā*, city of no woes: the Realm of Truth and Immortality.

Only cities constructed by prophets are holy cities, and they are holy cities only as long as their holiness and sanctity is maintained by keeping vice, sin, crime out of it. When ruthless anti-God rulers destroy such cities and their Temples, they go to the grave with all the curse and ignominy on their head, which the lovers of holiness and truth can heap on them.

Real ablution is bathing one's mind, heart and soul in the remembrance of God, but this does not mean that we should give up taking bath altogether as some cynics in India do. The two have to be blended together.

Only cities built by prophets with the shrines for continuous prayer and worship are holy cities. Kings and Emperors may build very large cities with innumerable temples. They do not become holy cities because they are devoid of holiness and holymen. A holyman in Sikhism is considered a moving place of pilgrimage. Says Bhāī Gurdās, "The place where Bābā Nānak sets his foot becomes a place of pilgrimage."<sup>30</sup> During the fifteen years, I spent to prepare my biography of Gurū Nānak, I found places in remote areas in Himālāyan range, Ḍaccā, Beṅgāl, South India, visited by Gurū Nānak and Gurū Tegh Bahādur, where there was not a single Sikh, when I went there. Yet these places, having sometimes



simple enclosures, without any temple had become places of worship and profound veneration. Lāmās in these areas do not give any medicine to a sick man till they have said, "I offer this medicine in the name of *Rimpōche* Gurū Nānak." Muslims and Hindus in Ḍāccā and Viṣṇupur and other places in East and West Bengāl seek blessings from these places, where once, hundreds of years ago, Gurū Nānak came and gave such lasting solace and peace that they still feel the place was sanctified, and to this day they receive His blessings and grace from it.

No doubt, the real pilgrimage is the inner pilgrimage, but places which preserve the memory of prophets, saints and spiritually creative great men also become places of pilgrimage, and they remain so as long as their sanctity and spiritual purity is maintained. For corporate worship, for ideal religious communion, for an experiment of building sound and spiritually enlightened society, building of such holy cities is a part of the morally enlightened civilization. Some day such a civilization will come into existence. This was the vision of Sikh Gurūs from Gurū Nānak to Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh:

*·dānav dev phañid apārā.*

*gaṇḍharb jachh rachai sub chārā.*

Mighty despots and Illumined Saints

Night-walkers and serpent kings,

Of the past and the present,

Even those that in future be,

Will one and all worship Thee;

Creatures on land, earth and sea,

Will erelong enshrine Your presence,

Within their hearts and soul.

Virtue shall march in full glory

With trumpet sounds of victory.

All hordes of the wicked and dissolute,

Will be crushed and destroyed from the roots,

The virtuous and noble saints shall ever dwell

In freedom and peaceful contentedness;

The perverse on seeing the victory of Truth and God  
Will quail in agony and bewail their lot.

*Dasam Granth*, Gurū Gobind Singh, *Akāl Ustāḥ*. 7, p. 11.

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18. *Ibid.*, p. 1039.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 590.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 992.
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22. *Ibid.*, pp. 110, 879.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 463.
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25. *Ibid.*, p. 1102.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 1412.
27. (i) Bhāi Gurdās, *Vār. 28, Paurī. 1.*  
(ii) *Ādi Gurū Granth*, p. 918.
28. *Ādi Gurū Granth*, p. 1416.
29. John Prickett (Ed), *Living Faiths: Death*, pp.110-22. Interpretation of Sikh Concept of Death and its associated ceremonies and beliefs was presented by the author at the Annual Conference of the Standing Conference on Inter-Faith Dialogue in Education, held in Bedford in 1977. The same has been updated and revised.
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## CHAPTER 20

# MISSIONARY INGROUUPS OF SIKHISM SIKH *SAMPARDĀYAS*

## UDĀSĪ MISSIONARIES

Gurū Nānak's elder son Srī Chaṇd was a celibate with ascetic temperament, and when he saw his father going on missionary tours in the dress of a *Udāsī* (recluse who renounce the world), he started training himself as an ideal Udāsī and prospective successor to his father. The first surprise Srī Chaṇd got was when Gurū Nānak gave up his Udāsī dress and lived in ordinary Puṇjābī dress, which everyone wore. The second surprise Srī Chaṇd got was when he chose Aṅgad as his successor, six months before his death, and asked him to set up his pontific seat at Khaḍūr. Kartārpur, where Gurū Nānak had spent the last twenty years of his life, was left to the exclusive control of the family where Srī Chaṇd carried on his missionary activities, preaching ascetic ideals in the name of Gurū Nānak without much success.

When Gurū Nānak passed away in 1539 A.D., Srī Chaṇd was 43 years old, while Gurū Aṅgad was hardly 35 years of age. Srī Chaṇd could not believe that an outsider, who had become a disciple of his father only during the last fifteen years of his life, could know more about him than a religious minded son like him, who was a born celibate (*bāl-jatī*), whose self-control, ascetic habits and yogic powers were known to everyone. He lived upto the age of 133 years and found that there were five most brilliant successors on his father's pontific throne, but during a whole century of his activities he could not find one worthy successor among his Udāsī disciples, while Gurū Hargobīnd still had

spiritually gifted sons.

Srī Chaṇd sought the permission of Gurū Hargobiṇḍ to bestow his mantle on his elder son Bābā Gurdittā, who was hardly sixteen years old, and expressed his fervent desire that the Udāsīs should henceforth be disciplined, trained and given the status of a highly respected missionary wing of Sikhism. Under guidance of Bābā Gurdittā, the first four orders of the Udāsīs were organized. They were known as *Dhūāns* (literally Ascetic Fires set up by Yogīs and *Siddhas*) under four outstanding leaders: (i) Bālū Hasnā, (ii) Almast (an intoxicated saint and mystic, (iii) Bhāī Phul, (iv) Bhāī Goīṇḍ. All were great scholars, mystics and intensely active missionaries. Almast organized well trained students like Mukh Chaṇd, Bhāī Nathā and others, who established missionary centres all over India from Pilibhūt in U.P. to Ḍaccā, Purī in Oṛissā and Beṅgāl. Udāsī saint Kirpāl, who fought with his club in the battle of Bhaṅgāṇī, (the first battle of Gurū Gobīṇḍ Siṅgh) was a disciple of Almast. Udāsīs, like the two other religious orders founded subsequently, were partly monastic, partly saintly missionary organization. The Udāsīs completely gave up worldly ambitions, secular life, and devoted themselves exclusively to missionary work. The *Khālsā Paṁth* considered this missionary order inseparable part of the Sikh nation, and the most respected part. Management of historical Sikh temples was exclusively left to them all over India. They went to the remote corners of India, established missionary centres in all places visited by Gurū Nānak from Kābul to Ḍaccā, and from Nepal to Kanyā Kumārī and Rameshwaram. They learnt the languages of these regions, prepared absolutely correct copies of *Ādi Gurū Granth*, and installed them in these places and interpreted the Sacred Scriptures and preached the life-stories of the Gurūs as best as they could.

The Udāsīs generally camped in forests, and like the ancient Yogīs and *Rishīs* (*Rṣis*) kept the fire burning with forest fuel, easily available in the jungle. There, they meditated for days and nights on *Gurbāṇī* and the Name of God, and their most solemn oath was

on a ball of ashes prepared from such fires called, *dhūnī*. The fire gave the much needed light and heat in the cold forest dwellings and was the symbol of their ideal of searching Light in the world of darkness. These four founder leaders organized missionary work from Kābul to Dāccā. Upto this day the Udāsīs in their Invocation first remember the ten Gurūs and then Srī Chaṇḍ and Bābā Gurdittā and then these four great missionaries. Udāsī Saint poets have composed poems to commemorate the memory of the ten Gurūs and their Udāsī Masters, in which they are remembered in that order followed by the names of Bālū Hasnā and Almast.

Bābā Gurdittā died at the age of 25, but Gurū Hargobiṇḍ, Gurū Hari Rāi, Hari Krishan, Gurū Tegh Bahādur and Gurū Gobiṇḍ Singh continued to help in training and expanding these missionary groups. After Gurū Hargobiṇḍ all the four Gurūs selected prominent Udāsīs, blessed them with spiritual gifts and appointed them as their authentic and authorized missionaries. These newly appointed Udāsī Missionaries were called *Bakhśīsh* (Blessed Ones) of the Gurūs.

NAME OF THE UDĀSĪ SAINT	BLESSED AND APPOINTED BY
Suthrā Shāh	Gurū Hari Rāi
Sanḡat Sāhib	Gurū Hari Rāi
Bhakta Bhagwān	Gurū Hari Rāi
Mihān Shāh	Gurū Tegh Bahādur
Jīt Mal	Gurū Gobiṇḍ Singh
Bakhat Mal	Gurū Gobiṇḍ Singh

When the *Masaṇds* of Rām Rāi cremated him, while he was still in *samādhi*, and captured his *ḍerā*, Gurū Gobiṇḍ Singh expelled these armed treacherous Masaṇds and installed Puñjāb Kaur to reorganize the *ḍerā* on Udāsī principles. She adopted an Udāsī youth as her spiritual son and lived upto 1744 A.D. to established the *Ḍehrādūn ḍerā* exclusively on Udāsī pattern. She rendered great help to the Holy Mothers, Mātā Suṇḍarī and Mātā Sāhib Devī during Baṇḍā period and for long after that. But the Masaṇds who burnt Rām Rāi alive, captured the Lāhore and some other

ḍerās of Rām Rāi and helped the Mughals and Afghāns, for which reason a social boycott of these Rām Rāiyās of Puñjāb was proclaimed. They were virtually eliminated, and in the due course most of the ḍerās of Rām Rāi come under the control of Mātā Puñjāb Kaur. The ḍerā is still run on Udāsī pattern, but perpetuates the memory of Rām Rāi as their Gurū, and their *Ardāsa* includes all the first seven Gurūs, Sri Chaṇd, Bābā Gurdittā and Rām Rāi. The four Dhūāns (Founder Fires) and six Bakhśīshs (ten in all) matched with the ten Hindu schools of *Sannyāsīns*. The Udāsīs wore crimson red robes and kept rosary. Upto the end of eighteenth century they put on hair, beard and turbans. During the eighteenth century, and after that when the political conditions became disturbed and the religious and cultural surroundings were hostile, they changed their external forms and sometimes became outwardly Yogīs with matted hair, and at other times intoxicated naked *fakīrs*. This was to conceal their identity and their spiritual connections with Khālsā warriors, who were fighting a continuing war with the Mughals, the Afghāns, the Marāṭhās and the British. But they carried the message of *Ādi Gurū Granth* everywhere. Their spiritual oath of loyalty was to the ten Gurūs and their eternal living spirit *Ādi Gurū Granth*.

Within a century the Udāsī saints acquired much more prestige and importance than the Masaṇds had ever acquired. When the *Mīṇā* cult of Prithī Mal (Brother of Gurū Arjan Dev) collapsed and disintegrated, his descendants Nirañjan Rāi, Hargopāl, Kaulji (Kanwal Nain) quarrelled among themselves. In 1700 A.D. the administration of the Harimaṇdir Sāhib, Amritsar was taken over by Bhāi Manī Singh and Nirañjan Rāi settled in the village Gharāchoṇ, Saṅgrūr. His son Soḍhī Dakhaṇī Rāi was fed up with the Mīṇā pretensions of his great grandfather, and joined the Udāsī Order. Thus many Soḍhīs and Bedīs took pride in joining the Udāsī Order. It is the custom among Bedī families even these days, that just before marriage every young Bedī adopts the Udāsī garb and lives as such for some days. Some scions of the Bedī families were so overwhelmed by this ceremony that they

became Udāsī monks instead of getting married.

Suthrā Shāh was not only an Udāsī Saint but enjoyed the liberty in the Gurū's court, which only the court jesters in medieval European courts and Shakespeare's plays enjoyed. *Khushwaqt Rāi* in his *Tārīkh-i-Sikhān* enumerate many stories of enlightened humour of Suthrā Shāh, who was a great mystic and a laughing philosopher. Bhāi Gurdās Dakhaṇī, who is said to have accompanied Gurū Gobiṇd Singh to Nander and then settled at Pilibhīt, was the first to prepare the *Rehitnāmā* (Code of Conduct) for the Udāsīs. Those Udāsīs novices, who were *Sahajdhārīs*, joined the mission as Sahajdhārī and remained as such. Those who came from Sikh families were trained in the *Khālsā Rehit* and were asked to serve the Sikh Community according to the *Khālsā* Code of Conduct.

Like the *Sewā Panthīs* and *Nirmalās*, the Udāsīs were exclusively devoted to Sikh missionary work. During the eighteenth century the best copies of *Ādi Gurū Granth* were prepared and preserved by them. Nearly fifty per cent, if not more, absolutely correct recensions of *Ādi Gurū Granth*, *Vārs* of Bhāi Gurdās and works of Bhāi Naṇd Lāl were written by Udāsī scribes and preserved in Sikh shrines, supervised by Udāsīs. As Udāsīs, *Nirmalās* and *Sewā Panthīs* were organized by Gurū Hargobiṇd, Gurū Tegh Bahādur and Gurū Gobiṇd Singh as missionary wings, the *Khālsā* respected them as indispensable part of the *Panth*, and just as the *Khālsā* had complete responsibility for military activities, the Udāsīs, *Sewā Panthīs*, *Nirmalās*, *Sahajdhārīs* and *Khālsā* saints were given equal and free participation in religious and cultural affairs. It was the Udāsīs who constructed the canal which brought fresh water to the Sacred Pool (*sarover*) of Harimaṇdir in Amritsar. The two flags in front of *Akāl Takhat* and ceremonies related to them were re-established by Udāsīs. Over a hundred prominent Udāsī saints and mystics are well-known for their missionary work in Kābul, Dāccā, Gorakhmatā, Purī, Rameshwaram and Allahābād, Hardwār and a number of places in Pūnjāb. When the *Misal Sardārs* were busy fighting against the

Mughals and Afghāns, they looked after the historical shrines. The Udāsī saints were well provided in the Puñjāb, but they were not only unwelcome in Hindu centres outside India, but were even treated disrespectfully. But Hindus impressed by their spiritual powers became their followers.

The eminent Udāsī saint and mystic Nirbāṇ Prītam Dās went to Nander to pay homage to Gurū Gobīnd Siṅgh's shrines. Dīwān Nānak Chānd, a Sahajdhārī official of Hyderābād State offered him seven lakh rupees for building Udāsī centres at important places of pilgrimage so that Udāsīs who preached Sikhism in these places could live independently of everyone.

In the year 1879, Saint Prītam Dās called a meeting of all prominent Udāsīs at Allāhābād and placed all the money at their disposal for building Udāsī *Akhārās* to disseminate the teachings of Gurū Nānak. Udāsī Order was recognized under the name *Panchāyatī Akhārā*, thereby indicating that no single person was to be sole spiritual Authority over all. According to their published and established Rules of the Order, *Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib* was to be the Supreme Gurū and Head of the Mission. Four *Mahants* were elected, who were to act as overall administrators and always remain under the moral and spiritual direction of *Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib*. The four leaders were, Mahant Gaṅgā Rām, Katūshth Brahm, Anūp Brahm and Aṭal Brahm. The Headquarter was established at Allāhābād as the political situation in Puñjāb and Delhī was uncertain. Nirbāṇ Prītam Dās kept himself detached in order to live like a recluse.

Santokh Dās was another luminary of this period, who with the help of Prītam Dās built the tributary from Rāwī river, which brought fresh water continuously to the sacred pond of the Golden Temple. At first, Jai Siṅgh Kanhiyā's attitude was non-cooperative, but when the Udāsī saint protested with forty days *dharnā*, he relented. All the major Akhārās of Amritsar were built by Santokh Dās and Prītam Dās. Even in places where there was not a single Sikh, the Udāsīs prevented the historical shrines of Gurū Nānak from being converted into Hindu temples by keeping the *Ādi Gurū*



*Granth* in every shrine and carrying on the reading of the Holy Book. In many places they courageously resisted Hindu and Muslim domination and coercion, and refused to accept any Hindu rites, not sanctioned by Gurū Nānak-Gurū Gobīnd Singh. A tragic incident that took place in *Kumbh Melā* at Hardwār in April 1797 highlights this fact.

The Kumbh Melā of April 1797 attracted, according to eyewitness account of Thomas Hardwicke, given in his *Narrative of a Journey to Srinagar*, about two and half million souls. It was the practice of Udāsī and Nirmalā Sikh missionaries to pitch their camps, hoist their flags, start *Akhaṇḍ Pāṭh* (continuous reading of *Ādi Gurū Granth*) and then give discourses on the basis of lives and Hymns of the Gurūs and the *Bhaktas* of *Ādi Gurū Granth*. On this fair the Nirmalās and Udāsīs pitched their camps at a distance of about four kilometres from each other.

*Nāgā Sādhūs*, who called themselves *Gosāin Sannyāsīs*, were backed by the Marāṭhās, and the British exercised magisterial control over this fair and charged every pilgrim from eight *ānnās* to one rupee. They went about naked, but were armed to the teeth. They would fine, flog, torture everyone who displeased them and who did not pay them what they demanded. Captain Hardwicke relates how they slavishly served the Englishmen by offering them special facilities and bodyguards. The Mahants of *Gosāins* and the *Bairāgīs* who considered themselves next in importance, ordered the Udāsīs and Nirmalās to remove their flags and stop the recitation of *Ādi Gurū Granth*, and above all, pay one rupee and twenty-five paisā as pilgrim tax per head for all those attending their services. Both the Nirmalās and the Udāsīs had opened *laṅgar* for all devotees, and this attracted large crowds and perhaps also donors. The Nirmalās lowered their flag, but the Udāsīs refused either to lower their flag, or to stop the continuous reading of *Ādi Gurū Granth*, or even to pay pilgrim taxes because they considered themselves as respectable monks and holy men as the *Gosāin Sannyāsīs*. The main function of the Kumbh was on April 8. But on April 7, the *Gosāin* armed with guns and swords

mercilessly attacked the peace-loving Udāsīs. They burnt their camps, looted their possessions, killed or wounded anyone who came in their way, particularly those conducting the continuous reading of *Ādi Gurū Granth*. They not only killed Udāsīs indiscriminately, but even chopped *Ādi Gurū Granth* with their swords; a sacrilegious act which was unbearable for any Sikh worth the name. The news reached the Nirmalā camp, who took shelter in Bhāi Dargāhā Singh's *Dharamsāla*.

When the Sikh Sardārs, Rāi Singh, Sher Singh, Rājā Sāhib Singh of Paṭiālā, Karam Singh of Shāhbād, Dasauṇḍā Singh of Sadhaurā, Jodh Singh of Kālso, Bhūp Singh of Ruper came to know, they all marched to Hardwār with armed horsemen and reached Hardwār the same evening. The Udāsīs who had been slain and brutally murdered were cremated, and the reading of the *Ādi Gurū Granth* started. The flag of the Udāsīs was hoisted. As the next day was the Kumbh Melā, the Sardārs restrained from action. They just watched how the armed Gosāin went about using their law of the gun and *lāṭhī* (Stick) against innocent pilgrims. The Mahañt of the Gosāins fearing retaliation sent apologies and returned some of the horses and goods of the Udāsīs, but did not present himself. April 8, passed peacefully and so did April 9 and 10. When the pilgrims had melted away, the Sikh Sardārs attacked the Gosāins, set fire to their ḍerās and killed them with the same blind fury with which the Udāsīs had been attacked. They publically declared that they will carry on the punishment to its logical conclusion till all concerned declared that never in future, Udāsīs and Nirmalā Sikh *Sādhūs* would be molested on any Kumbh Melā or any such fair. A British force was camping on the other side of the river, which came to the rescue of the Gosāins. But that was the last fair when the Gosāins acted as administrators of this or any other Kumbh Melā. A few years later when the Kumbh Melā was again held at Hardwār and Kurukshetrā, the Udāsīs and the Nirmalās pitched their camps and were the major attraction of pilgrims. Very eminent Udāsī and Nirmalā saints attended these fairs, and their missionary zeal and achievements were

unmatched. They still conduct similar sessions but on a lower scale.<sup>1</sup>

After the annexation of Puñjāb, the British government encouraged the Udāsī Mahants of historical shrines of the Sikhs to treat the shrines and the vast property attached to them, as their private property. They assured them legal and administrative support. The result of this was the Nankāṇā Sāhib tragedy of 1922, when Mahant Narāiṇ Dās massacred about 80 Sikhs unarmed pilgrims. The wrath of the Sikh community became a fiery movement, and those who conducted the movement started a daily paper *Akālī* to fight such corruption and the sinister moves of the British government. Those who conducted the movement began to be called *Akālīs*, and then emerged a party under the leadership of eminent selfless Sikhs of the times who suffered imprisonments and the most brutal treatment at the hands of British rulers. But all Udāsīs were not corrupt. Seventy years after taking control over the Sikh temples, the present Akālī leadership is quite a contrast to the founders of the party. The present Akālī administration of the Golden Temple has become far more corrupt than the Udāsīs ever were. The Udāsīs are still doing quite a lot of missionary work, but massive Gurdwārā funds are consumed for personal aggrandisement and dirty politics by Akālī leaders without achieving anything in any field. Quite a large number of office bearers of the present S.G.P.C. are Communists, virtual atheists and drunks. There is nothing religious about them and their only achievement is that they have alienated all the religious missionary groups like Udāsīs, Nirmalās, Sewā-Panthis and Nihāṅgs. A revolution against the present massive corruption, where political workers have been appointed as priests and religious propagandists, and no literature worth the name has been printed in any language, is overdue.

The Udāsī saints should once more get together and bring revival not only among themselves, but among the masses, and they should undertake a massive campaign against the indiscriminate use of wine and drugs, now encouraged by Akālī

politicians. Some years ago all the saints and religious groups got together to select the best interpreters and best readers of *Akhaṇḍ Pāṭh* according to enlightened traditions, intonations and expression. An Udāsī Saint of Amritsar district was declared the best reader of the *Akhaṇḍ Pāṭh*. It is inspired Udāsīs who are well versed in *Ādī Gurū Granth*, who can bring about such a revival. The *Khālsā* Sikhs should stop looking on the *Akālī* politicians as their religious or even political saviours. Under the party uniform of *Akālī* party it is difficult to find one percent Sikhs who are really religious and have knowledge of Sikh Scriptures and history. The Udāsīs, *Nirmalās* and the *Sewā Panthī* saints should be given full freedom and opportunity to bring about a religious revival within the limits of their ability and according to the methods, each groups has been using in the past. The spirit of *Srī Chaṇḍ*, *Bābā Gurdittā* and *Almast* should once more inspire them to uphold the flag of *Ādī Gurū Granth*.

With the exception of a few centres, almost all the Udāsī *Akhārās* were opened in the name of eminent Udāsī saints, who were contemporaries of the Sikh *Gurūs*. There are approximately 20,000 Udāsīs all over India. The following is the list of Udāsī *Akhārās* founded in the name of eminent Udāsīs:

NAME OF LEADER IN WHOSE NAME AKHĀRĀS IS ESTABLISHED	NUMBER OF UDĀSĪ AKHĀRĀS
Bālu Hasnā	403
Almast	176
Phul Sāhib	86
Mīhan Sāhib	232
Bhagat Bhagwān Sāhib	383
Suthrā Sāhib	8
Diwānā Sāhib (Intoxicated Saint)	20
Others (Founded by Santokh Dās, Prītam Dās and their Diṣciples	120

The major cities in which *Akhārās* are found, are as follows:

NAME OF CITY	NAME OF UDĀSĪ AKHĀRĀ
Amritsar	Brahm Būṭā Akhārā
	Saṅgalāwālā Akhārā
Ayodhyā	Rāno Palī
Ahmedābād	Ved Mandit
Allāhābād	Baṛā Akhārā
Hardwār	Baṛā Akhārā
	Navān Akhārā
	Gurū Maṇḍal
	Gangeśwar Dhām
Calcuttā	Lāl Bābā
Jalandhar	Alolpur
Dehrādūn	Darbār Bābā Sāhib
Delhī	Bābā Harī Har Akhārā
Bombay	Sādhū Belā
Bahādurpur (Hoshiārpur)	Bābā Charaṇ Dās
Benāras	Sādhū Belā
Lucknow	Bābā Hazārā Bāgh

The author met the *Udāsī* Saint Lāl Bābā in 1956, who lived in a houseboat in Calcuttā. He was over 150 years old, very alert and active, and talked of the last days of Raṅjīt Singh's rule, of which he had some vivid memories. The author has also located *Akhārās* in Madrās, Rameshwaram, Madurāi, Kānchīpuram, which were earlier controlled by the *Udāsī* Chief of Purī. There are *Udāsī* *derās* in Abū and a number of other places.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE NIRMALĀ KHĀLSĀ MISSIONARIES

When the Khālsā Holy order was created in 1699 A.D. at Anandpur, there was a lot of confusion about the New Code of Conduct outside Puñjāb. Gurū Gobīnd Singh trained 52 disciplined missionaries and explained to them *Gurū Granth*, the

final version of which was prepared at Damdamā in Anaṇḍpur. The fifty-two scholars thus trained, were called the *Āḍi Damdamī Taksāl* of Anaṇḍpur. He sent Bhāi Manī Siṅgh to Harimaṇḍir, Bābā Dīp Siṅgh to Damdamā (Mālwa region). It was considered advisable to send Sanskrit scholars to Benāras and other Hindu centres of learning, which had been in existence since centuries. They had to fight with the sword of knowledge, and they were thoroughly equipped in the Sanskrit and Vedic literature. The five leaders selected for going to Benāras were: Rām Siṅgh, Karam Siṅgh, Gaṇḍā Siṅgh, Vir Siṅgh and Sohbā Siṅgh. According to *Nirmal Pañth Pradiṇkā*, about 20 more were sent in groups of five to Hardwār, Kurukshetra and such places.

They were strictly ordered to maintain the *Khālsā Rehīt* including the Externals of five K's, and with very rare exception they have maintained the tradition. In matters of dress liberal attitude was taken for all missionaries. Udāsīs who operated mainly at Nāthpañthī Centres and the areas of influence of Vaiṣṇavas and Śaivas, preferred crimson red, patronized by many Śaivites. The Nirmalā scholars had to work in cities where the greatest Sanskrit scholars debated and discussed theological and religious issues, and he who won public debates and open discussions won the acclaim and following of the people. The Brāhmins in Benāras wore white dress, while Monks and other holy men put on ochre dyed clothes. First, the Nirmalā groups put on white dress, but then most of them preferred ochre dyed dress, which was a sign of holiness in all the holy places in Uttar Pradesh. They knew too much about the Hindu Scriptures, and their duty was to present Sikh doctrines in the context of Indian traditions and remove the ignorance of the people about Sikhism, and attract genuine seekers to work with them in their Order. They had sympathetic understanding and appreciation of *Vedānta*, but they strongly opposed *Tāntric* and *Haṭh Yoga*, and extremes of Vaiṣṇavism, which encouraged idolatry and emotionalism. Theirs was always a very sober mission, seriously conducted, in which ignorant and illiterate people had no place except to be pious

devotees.

In the last three centuries the Nirmalā scholars have produced monumental works in Saṅskṛit, Braj, Hindī and Puṅjābī, many of which are nowadays indispensable to students of Sikh history and theology.

There have been four eminent Nirmalā scholars having the same name, Nihāl Siṅgh, who lived during the later half of eighteenth century and first half of nineteenth century. Saṅt Nihāl Siṅgh Nirmalā was a great scholar who hailed from Rāwalpiṇḍī, but settled in Amritsar towards the end of eighteenth century. He prepared a Sanskrit translation of Gurū Nānak's *Japujī* entitled *Gūḍhārth-dīpikā*. Mahārājā Raṅjīt Siṅgh was impressed by his saintliness and popularity, and to win his support he personally visited him to offer a grant-deed of as much land as was given to Udāsī Akhārā near Golden Temple to Udāsī saints Santokh Dās and Pritam Dās. Saṅt Nihāl Siṅgh tore the grant-deed in the presence of Mahārājā Raṅjīt Siṅgh and said, "My Great Gurūs, Gurū Nānak-Gurū Gobind Siṅgh have been providing me with more than enough. Nirmalā scholars do not crave for any property or wealth for themselves." When the Mahārājā again asked what could he do to serve the noble saint? Saṅt Nihāl Siṅgh replied: "You can do one positive service for us. Never try to tempt any saint and scholar with your money and *jāgīrs*, particularly those who have never knocked at your door. Learn something from them about Sikh traditions and Sikh way of life, instead of tempting them with your wealth and jāgīrs, and getting away with the impression that your money power and political power can buy even saints and scholars."

The second Nihāl Siṅgh was a student of Thākur Dayāl Siṅgh of Amritsar. This Nihāl Siṅgh was also a great scholar of Saṅskṛit, and prepared a scholarly *Tīkā* (Commentary) on Gurū Gobind Siṅgh's *Jāpū* entitled *Chakradhār Charitar Chār Chaṇḍrikā* in 1872. The third Nihāl Siṅgh from Lāhore was author of well-known works: *Akāl Nāṭak*, *Nirmal Prabhākar*, *Sikh Prabhākar*. He wrote excellent poetry in Braj Bhāṣā and Multānī Puṅjābī, which the

Puñjābī Departments of Puñjāb, Puñjābī, Delhī and Kurukshetra Universities have conveniently or ignorantly ignored. The fourth Nirmalā scholar was student of Bhāī Lāl Siñgh Nirmalā. He was author of *Karvinder Prakāsh*, a monumental work of 466 pages, still in manuscript form, which is actually a compilation of the saint's works.

Gulāb Siñgh was one of the most outstanding scholar of Sañskṛit, Hindī and Puñjābī, who studied under Sañt Mān Siñgh during the second half of eighteenth century. The *Puñḍits* of Benāras were so jealous of the high quality of his poetry and scholarship in his works on Sikhism, that they acquired from him the original copies of some of his works on Sikhism and his comparative Study of Sikh Philosophy and Six Hindu Systems under the pretext of preparing copies of the manuscripts. But the mischievous Puñḍits destroyed all those works. Some of his precious works which still survived this vandalic action of mischievous Benāras Puñḍits are: (1) *Bhāvarasāmrit*, (2) *Mokh Pañth Parkāsh*, (3) *Prabodh Chañdardaya*, (4) Braj translation in verse of the famous Sanskr̥it work, *Adhyātam Rāmāyaṇ*. All these works were written by Gulāb Siñgh between 1772-1792 A.D. Nirmalā scholar Sādhū Siñgh of Hoshiārpur district wrote *Gurusikhī Prabhākar*, and *Srīmukhvaḥ Siddhānt Jyoti*.

In the second half of nineteenth century emerged two great Nirmalā scholar, Puñḍit Tārā Siñgh Narotam and Giānī Giān Siñgh, whose works are indispensable for all serious students of Sikh theology and history.

Puñḍit Tārā Siñgh was student of Puñḍit Gulāb Siñgh of Girvārī, Hoshiārpur district. In 1877 he wrote *Gurmat Nirmāi Sāgar*, in which one chapter is devoted to prove that *Rāgmālā* is not *Gurbāñī*. Then he wrote interpretative commentaries on *Japujī*, *Rehirās*, *Srī Rāga* and *Bhagat Bāñī* in 1782. It was followed by *Gur Tīrath Sañgreh*. His most important work was the first scientifically written Dictionary of *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, entitled *Guru Girārath Koś*.

Born in 1882 Giānī Giān Siñgh, student of Puñḍit Tārā Siñgh Narotam was educated at the Nirmala Akhārā of Barṇālā. His



brother's daughter was married to Mahārājā Hīrā Singh of Nābhā. During his long life of 105 years, he wandered all over India and Nepal and collected massive material for his historical works. He wrote excellent poetry in Puñjābī and Braj. His Puñjābī poetry and prose is simple and powerful. His main works in Puñjābī and Hindī poetry and prose are: (1) *Itihās Gurū Khālsā*, (2) *Shamshūr Khālsā*, (3) *Pañth Khālsā*, (4) *Rāj Khālsā*. These have been translated into Urdū also. (5) *Pañth Parkāsh*, (6) *Tawārīkh Amritsar*, (7) *Gurpūrb Prakāsh*, (8) *Nirmal Pañth Pradīpikā*, (9) *Tawārīkh Lāhore*, (10) *Amrit Prakāsh* (11) *Ṭikā Garbganjani Jāp*, (12) *Niti Prakāsh*, (13) *Itihās Rūp Chānd*. Mahārājā Paṭiālā helped him in the publication of his works. But when Giānī Giān Singh became very popular, Mahārājā Ripudaman Singh abducted him to his State and persuaded him to stay there and accept his patronage. He reminded the eminent scholar that he was his Grand Uncle (*Nānāji*), because the Mahārājā's mother was daughter of the historian's brother.

In 1861 Nirmalā Saints, Bhāi Mehtāb Singh, Bhāi Rām Singh and Bhāi Totā Singh reorganized the Nirmalā Missionaries. With about 3 lakhs donation coming from the *Rājās* of Paṭiālā, Nābhā, Jīnd and prominent Sikh Sardārs, they built their main Akhārā at Hardwār. The word Akhārā means training ground for wrestlers. These were the *Āśrams*, where they had to train Nirmalā scholars for intellectual wrestling in the mental and spiritual field. They had to be strong in mind, body and soul. They built their main Akhārā at Hardwār and named it *Dharam Dhuja*. A Code of Conduct and organizational rules were established with the Sikh Sardārs as the witnesses. The Head of the *Nirmalā Khālsā* Order was to be known as *Srī Mahant*, who was expected to be perfect *Khālsā* in his external as well as internal life. A deeply religious man, who was respected by all the Nirmalā Saints and also by the Sikh Community, was elected head. The first Head of this mission was Sañt Mehtāb Singh. He was to be addressed as *Srī Mahant*, and *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib* was to be the Supreme Gurū. The Rules drafted were called *Dastūr-al-Amal Akhārā Nirmal Pañth of Gurū*

*Gobind Singh*. The main rules were (i) All offerings by the devotees were to be made to *Ādi Gurū Granth* and not to persons and individuals. (ii) Every member of the Akhārā was to be provided with board, lodging, clothes and material for studies and missionary work. (iii) No Nirmalā missionary was to have any private property or private accounts. (iv) Women were not to be permitted to stay in the Akhārās. (v) Any Nirmalā inmate taking alcohol or any drug would be immediately expelled from the mission.

Mahārājā Ranjīt Singh found the Sikh rites inconvenient for the type of life, he was leading. Under the influence of Dogrās, he introduced Hindu rites into his own life and those of other Sardārs in order to lead Mughal style private life unchecked, against which eminent Sikhs like Akālī Phulā Singh and Bābā Sāhib Singh Bedī vainly protested, and then disassociated themselves from the Mahārājā and his politics. Even the Nirmalās had in many places given up wearing the *kachh*, but put on *laṅgoṭī*. So when some Nirmalās and even some Rājās went to Nander (Hazūr Sāhib), they were not permitted to enter the sanctum sanctorum of the *Takhat*, where only those having all the five K's and living the *Khālsā* life were permitted to enter. The Nirmalās went in a group without wearing the *kachh*, an important dress of the *Khālsā*. They were wearing the *langot*. They were asked to express regret for wearing the *laṅgot* and put on *kachh* (underwear) and then come for being permitted to the sanctum sanctorum. With the help of a *Pujārī* they forced their way into the *Takhat Sach Khand*, which was resisted by the *Dakhanī* Sikhs and the Nihāṅgs. In the clash Nirmalās were killed and the Nihāṅgs were arrested and punished by law. The Nirmalās and other Sikhs became conscious of the fact that the rules of the *Takhats* cannot be broken.

Yet the literary contributions of Nirmalā scholars are monumental and of lasting value. Apart from the names already mentioned, Saṁt Nikkā Singh translated *Yoga Vashīṣṭh* in Puṁjābī-Braj for Bibī Pradhān, daughter of Mahārājā Ālā Singh in 1752. In

1779, Sañt Sadā Siñgh wrote *San̄gam Sāra Chandrikā*, which is a commentary on Śaṅkarā's *Vedānta Sūtra Bhāṣya*. The book is also called *Advaita Bhāṣya*.

Giānī Sañt Siñgh wrote *Bhāvarth* of *Rāmcharit Mānas* of Tulsi Dās. He was the Head *Grānthī* of the Golden Temple from 1810-1820 and also the teacher of the gr̄eat scholar, poet and historian, Kavī Sañtokh Siñgh, author of *Sūraj Prakāsh*. In the present century Sañt Sampūran Siñgh, a very learned Nirmalā Scholar (Brother of Bhāī Mohan Siñgh Vaid) has published a very scholarly commentary on *Bhāgāt Bānī*, *Kabīr* and *Sawāīye* of Bhāī Gurdās. He also compiled and published *Rehitnāmās*. Some Sañt cults and even historians have tried to distort history. Giānī Giān Siñgh has shifted the birth place of Bhāī Manī Siñgh Shahīd (Martyr) to his own village Longowāl, although Manī Siñgh of his village was a *Dulat Jaṭ* and not Shahīd Bhāī Manī Siñgh, a Ksātrīyā. Giānī Giān Siñgh also shifted the Damdamā (of Anandpur), where the first authentic copies of *Ādi Gurū Grānth* were prepared to Damdamā in Baṭhiṇḍā district, where later on Bābā Dīp Siñgh set up his missionary centre. To carry the distortion further the Bhinḍrānwāle *Ṭaksāl* now claims to be the spiritual descendants of Damdamī *Ṭaksāl* (Spiritual lineage of interpreters of *Ādi Gurū Grānth*) of Bābā Dīp Siñgh, although all the followers of Bābā Dīp Siñgh and Bābā Gurbaksh Siñgh died to the last man for the sanctity of the Golden Temple. They left no successor. Sañt Suñder Siñgh, founder of Bhinḍrānwāle *Ṭaksāl* was student of Sañt Gulāb Siñgh, a Nirmalā Saint and actually belonged to the Amritsarī *Ṭaksāl*. I had the opportunity to meet Sañt Iñder Siñgh, brother of Sañt Suñder Siñgh many times and got first-hand material about the Saint's life from Sañt Gurbachan Siñgh. Sañt Iñder Siñgh died at the age of 104.<sup>3</sup>

H.A. Rose rightly comments, "The Nirmalās form a well disciplined and highly respected organization. Each monastery is under the Srī Mahant and an executive working under him. They supervise all centres. Almost all are celibates. They have a far higher reputation for morality than most other religious orders of

the Puñjāb.”<sup>4</sup>

### ADDAN SHĀHĪ SEWĀ PANTHĪ MISSIONARIES

Bhāi Kanhiyā was a disciple of Gurū Tegh Bahādur. He hailed from a very rich family, but he turned away from wealth and earthly riches and became a very humble and devoted disciple of Gurū Tegh Bahādur, whose hymns created in him the spirit of devotion, service and dedication of truth. He built a monastic centre on a highway to Peshāwar, where the pilgrims and the wayfarers had no resthouse or place where they could get some food and shelter. Even water was not easily available., The Muslims, the Hindus and the Sikhs were his daily guests, and were served with devotion and humility. Whatever some devotees offered was used for Free Kitchen: *Laṅgar*. When he went to meet Gurū Gobind Singh, he was asked to join a battle against the Mughals. While he tended the wounds of the Sikh soldiers and carried water for the dying in the battlefield, he served even the wounded soldiers of the enemies with deep compassion and human concern, for which strong protest was lodged against him by the Sikh warriors. When Gurū Gobind Singh questioned him, he replied: “Master, I see your face in every human soul. I see your light in every heart. I hear your voice in the cries of the wounded soldiers of our army as well as the Mughal army. To me, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs are all His creatures; some on the right path, others on the wrong path. Nevertheless they are His creatures. When I serve them, I serve you my Master. That is how I feel.” Gurū Gobind Singh embraced Bhāi Kanhiyā and asked him to carry on his mission. He also advised the Sikh soldiers never to strike a fallen soldier. His two devotees Bhāi Sewā Rām and Addan Shāh (born in 1688) set in motion a powerful movement, which still exists and is respected by the Sikhs. Dr Surain Singh Wilkhū in his monograph, *Bhāi Addan Shāh: Jīwan te Rachnā* has given two dates of Bhāi Addan Shāh’s birth i.e. 1688 A.D. and 1680 A.D. and at the same time calls him to be the

contemporary of Gurū Tegh Bahādur, which is historically incorrect, since Gurū Bahādur was martyred in 1675 A.D.<sup>5</sup>

Both Bhāi Sewā Rām and Bhāi Aḍḍaṇ Shāh trained quietists religious groups, which came to be known as Sewā Pañthī and Aḍḍaṇ Shāhī. Their main principles were to lead a life of service of the people, never to have any property and never to beg for alms. They generally earned their living by stitching clothes or preparing ropes and some work which could get them just enough to have two square meals. Even when the Sewā Pañthī saihns had a large following and plenty of money for Free Kitchen, they would work for their living. They generally put on white clothes. Many of the Sewā Pañthī saints lived in Sahajdhārī tradition. They built hospices for way-farers in the remote areas of eastern Puñjāb on highways, where ninety percent of the travellers were Muslims. Whatever money was offered by people was scrupulously spent on the sick, the needy and for charitable purposes.

Bhāi Aḍḍaṇ Shāh, third in succession to Bhāi Kanhiyā learnt Gurmukhī and got training in the exegesis of Sikh scriptural texts from an Udāsī Saint, Bābā Gurdās. He also remained in the company of Bhāi Sewā Rām, a disciple and successor of Bhāi Kanhiyā for a long time and succeeded him. Aḍḍaṇ Shāh was a Persian scholar and translated Al Ghazālī's *Kīmīya-i-Sa'ādat* and called it *Pāras-Bhāg: The Blessings of Philosopher's Stone*. Bābā Gurdās also trained him in calligraphic excellence, after acquiring which Aḍḍaṇ Shāh prepared excellent copies of *Ādi Gurū Granth*. The ink prepared according to the formula of Aḍḍaṇ Shāh was considered the best and was known as Aḍḍaṇ Shāhī Ink. The *Parchī* literature of this school is a living example of Bhāi Aḍḍaṇ Shāh's literary tastes. Besides Bhāi Aḍḍaṇ Shāh was a good orator and his speeches were recorded by Bhāi Sahaj Rām under the titles, *Sākhīān Bhāi Aḍḍaṇ Shāh*, *Sukhan Fakīrān De* and *Bachan Gobīnd Lokān De*. Aḍḍaṇ Shāh was living, when ruler of Lāhore had set a price on each head of the Sikhs. Once when the Emperor visited his *Pīr*, a Šūfī Saint, he found Aḍḍaṇ Shāh sitting by his side, who appeared to be a Sikh yet not a militant Sikh. He asked

his Pīr in Persian, "Is he the disciple of that dangerous rebel Gurū Gobīnd Singh?" The Pīr in order to protect his life and person from the Emperor's wrath said, "He is saint who has renounced the world and is disciple of Pīr Nānak Shāh, who went to Meccā and Madīnā." Bhāi Aḍḍan Shāh calmly but firmly replied, "*Pādsāh Salāmat*, I am the disciple of that rebel Gurū Gobīnd Singh who was ninth successor of Gurū Nānak and am proud of being one." The Emperor was stunned by the reply, and giving a formal bow to his Pīr and Aḍḍan Shāh, went away. Such had been the moral courage and commitment to Gurū Gobīnd Singh of Sewā Pañthī saints, most of whom were Khālsā Sikhs, but kept away from militant activities. Bhāi Aḍḍan Shāh died on April 20, 1757. The contemporaries of Bhāi Aḍḍan Shāh were: Bhāi Āyā Rām, Bhāi Raushan, Bhāi Rochī Rām, Bhāi Dharam Dās, Bhāi Darbārī, Bhāi Mūlā, Bhāi Raṅg, Bhāi Dayā Rām (Multān), Bhāi Kishan Dās, Bhāi Rām Dayāl, Bhāi Mahrā, Bhāi Pāras Rām, Bhāi Bhallā Rām and Bhāi Jagtā. Those in the Khālsā tradition were Bhāi Tirath Singh, Thakūr Dayāl Singh, Bhāi Gurdīāl Singh Sāhiwāl.

Bhāi Aḍḍan Shāh was succeeded by Bhāi Bhallā Rām, who trained and disciplined many eminent missionaries in the Khālsā tradition, the most important and leading figure was Sañt Sahāi Singh and Sañt Bhāi Rām Singh. These great saints and mystics trained a young boy of five, whose mother in those days of famine and scarcity of food could not afford to feed or educate the boy. The boy born in 1803 grew to be a great theologian and musician, who performed *Kīrtan* in the Golden Temple for nearly half a century. Reconstruction of dilapidated building of historical shrines, the first *Kār Sewā* (cleaning Golden Temple and the sacred tank) and opening of laṅgar and hospices for pilgrims was initiated by him. He was assisted by many saints and theologians, trained by him. He lived upto the age of 123 and died in 1923. He is remembered as Brahm Giānī, Bābā Shām Singh whose compassion and humility were legendary.

Even when the whole community revered him as the greatest living saint, he regularly performed the morning *Kīrtan* services in

the Golden Temple and went about doing the humblest services to attend the pilgrims and the needy and interpret the scriptures. Once a thief stole silver plated *Chowrie* from his room. Someone spotted the thief who was selling some goods in the market and sought his permission to bring him. "No", said the saint, "I will go to him personally." He took with him something and after meeting the thief said, "My friend, it is good you took away the Chowrie for the service of *Ādi Gurū Granth*, but you left other things equally necessary for service in a temple. Here they are." The man was terribly ashamed of what he had done and repented.

Once when he was about to enter the main door steps of the Golden Temple, a young lad of about 15 was so impressed by his personality that he touched his feet. The saint had given strict orders that no one should touch his feet. When people tried to prevent him from touching his feet, the boy thought that he had unconsciously made some mistake. So he ran away after touching the saint's feet. "Bring the boy here," said the saint. People ran after the boy, who escaped into the narrow streets of Amritsar, and it took about fifteen minutes to find him and bring him back. The boy was in tears and afraid of being punished severely, yet he did not know what he had done beyond touching the saint's feet. "Affectionately and calmly Bābā Shām Singh said, "Do not weep my child. We are not going to hurt you, but you have been brought back because I want to tell you that you have hurted me." Pointing to the sanctum sanctorum of the Harimandir (Golden Temple), he said, "Look my child, there is our King of kings. When you are in the Presence of the King of kings, never make the mistake of touching the feet of a humble slave (*gulām*) like me. This is an insult to the King. Now I must make amends for it. Stand still for a few minutes." The boy was wondering what punishment would now come to him. He again started weeping helplessly. The saint placed his head on the feet of the young boy and sought his forgiveness for not taking sufficient precautions to prevent him from touching his feet. Bābā Shām Singh was a great musician who performed music on *Sārāṇḍā*, (a musical instrument which is still

popular in Afghanistan), along with other instruments that were played in the Golden Temple, but has disappeared under the present administration, which has continuously shown aversion for art, music, literature and missionary work. He was also a great theologian and wrote beautiful inspiring prose. We still have two unpublished works by him: An annotation of *Gurū Granth Sāhib* and *Bhagat Prem Prakāsh Granth* (Biographies of the Saints).

Throughout the later half of eighteenth and nineteenth century the missionary work was done mainly by Sewā Pañthī saints. They worked in small groups and established great religious centres. One of the most important saint who established missionary centres and built Gurdwārās in West Puñjāb (now Pakistan), was Bhāi Dukh Bhañjan and his disciple Bhāi Budhū Shāh. Their major centres were at Bherā, Nūrpur, Shāhpur, Kālā, Miāni, Piñḍ Dādan Khān in the Chaj Doab (between rivers Jehlum and Chenāb). While on the way to Ūnā to meet Bābā Sāhib Singh Bedī, there was a chance encounter between Bhāi Dukh Bhañjan and Mahārājā Ranjīt Singh. When Ranjīt Singh offered him some money, he refused. But he asked Ranjīt Singh, "Have you memorized *Japuṁ*?" Ranjīt Singh remained silent, but one of his courtiers said, "No Sir, the Mahārājā will do it now." Then he asked, "Have you learnt the *Mūlmañtar*?" (Proem of *Japuṁ* having about 15 word) known to every Sikh kid these days. Ranjīt Singh again remained silent, which meant he did not even know the *Mūlmañtar*. Bhāi Dukh Bhañjan angrily remarked, "What kind of a Sikh are you? You have not applied your mind to the *Mūlmañtar* and the *Japuṁ*? What can you do for Sikhism, or for your own moral and spiritual enlightenment without knowing even *Mūlmañtar*?" Ranjīt Singh humbly requested to be taught the *Mūlmañtar*. Bhāi Dukh Bhañjan then recited the *Mūlmañtar* word by word and Ranjīt Singh recited after him."

Bhāi Budhū Shāh succeeded Bhāi Dukh Bhañjan as the spiritual leader of Sewā Pañthīs of Bherā. He was born at Tālī in Jhañg district in the year 1793. He was a staunch Sikh in Sahajdhārī tradition, who fought Brāhmaṇical rites of birth



marriage and death, which had been introduced in the court by Raṅjīt Siṅgh's ignorance of convenience, and were spreading to the bureaucrats and the people. Bhāi Budhū Shāh dressed so simply that a police officer who did not recognize him slapped him, because he did not do the service, he compelled him to do, as he desired. The saint offered the other cheek and assured him that in future he shall be careful in doing his duty.

Bābā Dayāl, who later became the leader of Nirāṅkāri movement, received spiritual enlightenment and directions of reformists zeal from Bhāi Budhū Shāh, although his descendants tried to make him a prophet, sent directly by God. There is nothing on contemporary records to prove that he claimed to be so, or he acted as a gurū. If the history of Sewā Panthī comes to be written, it shall be noted that the Saints of this mission have built almost all the major Sikh shrines in historical places even during the last seven decades.<sup>6</sup>

Bābā Khaṛak Siṅgh, leader of the Sewā Panthī Mission, was architectural genius, who had built the three storeyed Gurū Rām Dās Langar in the precincts of the Harimandir, and the biggest assembly Hall in South-East Asia at Bābā Budhū's Retreat (*Bir*: forest dwelling). He had also built Goīndwāl bridge, which has helped in the reconstruction of old G.T. Road. He was a man of great courage. During the Indo-Pak war, he carried food and water into the thick of the battlefield. He knew every inch in this area because his home village is Birkee. When after the Emergency imprisonment, the Akālī leaders visited the Harimandir Sāhib along with their workers, shouting slogans glorifying them, they came to Bābā Khaṛak Siṅgh who was staying in the Rāmgarhiā Buriṅgā. *Jathedār* Mohan Siṅgh Tur came close to him and sought his blessings, while other leaders sat at a distance. Bābā Khaṛak Siṅgh slapped *Jathedār* Mohan Siṅgh very hard. As the saint was an old companion and friend of his father, *Jathedār* Mohan Siṅgh Tur humbly asked with folded hands, "Bābā Jī, I do not know how I have offended you, and I do not have to ask, but it appears I have hurted you very much. Give me one more slap so that I may justly

repent over it." Bābā Kharak Singh sternly replied, "If you had offended me, I would have forgiven you. How dare you, a son of the great leader Sardār Jagat Singh Tur, dare to organize 'Mohan Singh Zindābād, Bādāl Zindābād, Tohrā Zindābād slogans in the precincts of the Golden Temple? How dare you? I do not care what these other ignorant Akālīs do, but you are the son of a great religious leader." Such was Bābā Kharak Singh, very tough, very soft. When Mohan Singh Tur died, he honoured him by personally taking his ashes to Kīratpur and praying for him.<sup>7</sup>

#### BĀBĀ DAYĀL DĀS AND HIS NIRĀŅKĀRĪ REFORM MOVEMENT

Bābā Dayāl Dās, founder of *Nirāṅkāri* Reform Movement, who campaigned vigorously against Brāhmanical rites, idolatry, social and moral corruption, was a Sahajdhārī Saint with strong and orthodox views, but a quietist mission. He was born in Peshāwar on May 17, 1783 A.D. His father's name was Rām Sahāi Malhotrā and his mother Lāḍikkī came from a very orthodox Khālsā Sikh family. Her father Bhāi Vasākhā Singh was son of Bhāi Bhagwān Singh, who was one time treasurer of Gurū Gobiṇd Singh.

Bābā Dayāl learnt Puṅjābī and Sikh Scriptures from his mother and regularly attended the historic Gurdwārā built by Bhāi Jogā Singh, a disciple of Gurū Gobiṇd Singh, along with his mother for prayers and worship. The Sewā Parīthī saints who were the direct disciples of Bhāi Kanhyā were the main priests and missionaries in this area. He also learnt Persian for his business and trade purposes. His father died when he was just a kid, and his mother died when he was 18 years old. His maternal uncle (Mother's brother) named Milkhā Singh persuaded him to settle down at Rāwalpiṇḍī, where he started a grocery shop and led a pious life.

Bābā Dayāl visited Bherā in order to meet Saṁt Budhū Shāh. He came under his spell and received spiritual instructions from him. Bhāi Budhū Shāh also arranged his marriage with the daughter of Bhāi Charan Dās, which was performed strictly

according to Sikh rites. Bhāi Budhū Shāh was so particular about discreetly avoiding Hindu rites, that when during his last illness someone offered him Ganges water as the penance of all ills, he angrily remarked, "All my life I have lived like a dutiful and faithful wife of the Lord according to the principles of ideal devotion, laid down by Gurū Nānak for the brides of God; do you now, by offering me Ganges water according to Brāhmaṇical rites, want me to indulge in prostitution by going to Hindu god and goddesses and performing the Hindu rites. Take away the Ganges water. For me every word of *Ādi Gurū Granth* is spring of an immortalizing drink (*amrit*). I do not need anything." It is with this determination that Bābā Dayāl followed Sikh principles and Sikh rites, except where he misunderstood some Sikh rites and practices.

The spiritual leadership of the family had remained within the family. When Bābā Dayāl died in 1855 A.D. he was succeeded by Bābā Darbārā Singh, who was a zealous reformer. After the death of Bābā Darbārā Singh, he was succeeded by the second son of Bābā Dayāl, named Bābā Rattan Chaṇd, affectionately called Bābā Rattā Jī. In 1870. Bābā Rattā Jī was succeeded by Bābā Gurdit Singh Jī and then by Bābā Harā Singh Jī. The present incumbent is Bābā Gurbakhsh Singh, and his brother Dr Mān Singh Nirāṅkāri is the President of the *Nirāṅkāri Durbār*, Chaṇḍigarh. To the Sikh intelligentsia the activities of Nirāṅkāri Mission are known mainly through Dr Mān Singh Nirāṅkāri.

During the time of Bābā Rattā, every Sikh saint tried to become a *Gurū* or *Satgurū*, and they linked themselves with Gurū Nānak and Gurū Gobiṇḍ Singh through legendary stories. Bābā Rattā also presented Bābā Dayāl as *Satgurū*, and himself as the third *Gurū* with a divine mission. Letters were issued by their *ḍerās* having good moral instructions, but posing as *Satgurūs*.

After the occupation of Puṅjāb by British armies, the people in Puṅjāb, particularly the Sikhs became insensitive to finer spiritual ideals. Religious institutions had either become corrupt or were controlled by the alien rulers in the interest of undermining Sikh faith. Both the British Political Officers and

Christian Missionaries were busy in this direction, trying to replace the Sikh prophets and Indian Sages by Christ as the Saviour of their soul. The crude manner in which they went about the business is quite apparent from the reports of Christian Missionaries of this period quoted by Dr Webster in his book *The Nirāṅkāri Sikhs*. All contemporary and near contemporary records show that the Bābā Dayāl never called himself "Gurū" or "Satgurū". Had he done so, then it meant that while he was fighting Brāhmaṇism, he was introducing the worst feature of Brāhmaṇism in which every holy man and Brāhmaṇ becomes a Gurū, to establish his separate cult. We will quote two near-contemporary records:

(1) Denzil Charles Jelf Ibbetson, in his *Report on the Census of the Puṇjāb* says: "The Nirāṅkāris are the purists of the Sikh religion, and their founder was Bhāi Dayāl Siṅgh, who died only twelve years ago. His preaching was directed rather against religious ceremonies than against social and caste institutions, which later he would leave untouched. But he taught that the Gurūs are to be revered only as high priests of one single and invisible God, that the Hindu deities are not divine, that pilgrimages and offerings are useless, and Brāhmaṇs and cows not to be revered, and that animal life is to be scrupulously respected and use of flesh as food abandoned. The first day of each month is to be kept holy by attendance at the temple, reading the *Granth*, lamenting for sin, and giving contributions for religious purposes. His ethical teachings was like that of most of these sects, when they first rise, singularly pure, and he avoided that rock of offence upon which many of them find shipwreck; a tendency to license in the intercourse between the sexes."<sup>8</sup> It was on this rock that impostor *Nirāṅkāris* (a breakway cult of Avtār Siṅgh and Gurbachan Siṅgh), which has given liberty for indulgence in drinking and sex freedom, is facing shipwreck after riding the high seas under the patronage and protection of the anti-Sikh policies of our Delhī rulers.<sup>9</sup>

(2) H.A. Rose in his *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the*

*Punjab and North-West Frontier Provinces*, says: "The term 'Nirāṅkār', 'Incorporeal' is old in Sikhism, dating back to Bābā Nānak himself, who was originally called Nānak Nirāṅkārī. The sect, however, is modern one, having been founded by one Bhāi Dayāl Dās Khatrī of Peshāwar, who established it at Rāwalpiṇḍī about 1845. On his death in 1870, his son Bhāi Darbārā Singh succeeded him and then Bhāi Rattā, another son. The Nirāṅkārī worship one Invisible God as a Spirit, who is hearer of prayer, avoids idols and making no offerings to them, to Brāhmins or the dead. They abstain from all flesh and liquor and reverence truth. Pilgrimages are regarded as useless, and neither Brāhmins nor cows are to be revered. The first day of the month is to be kept holy by attendance at the temple, reading the *Granth*, repentance for sins and alms-giving. Weddings are celebrated strictly according to the Sikh rites by a Granthī and not by a Brāhmin; the bride sits unveiled in public and the pair circumambulate the *Ādi Granth* instead of fire. Widows may remarry. At funerals also, they dispense with Brāhmins and instead of mourning, the event is regarded rather as an occasion of rejoicing. The Nirāṅkārīs also inculcate belief in the transmigration of the souls, reverence and honour towards parents. Lying, cheating and using false weights are peculiarly heinous crimes. The use of wine and flesh is prohibited."<sup>10</sup>

#### NIHAṄGS IN HISTORY AND AT PRESENT

The word *Nihaṅg* in Persian means (i) Shark (ii) Sword. In Saṅskṛit, the word for shark or alligator is *Nihaka*. The Persian word *Nihaṅg Siyah* means a "glittering sword" and *nihaṅg* means "sword in the scabbard." In the *Sarb Loh Granth* and *Dasam Granth* of Gurū Gobīnd Singh, it is used in the sense of sword as well as for a horse. In the *Ādi Gurū Granth* and *Dasam Granth* there is another usage from which the *Nihaṅg Jathās* actually derive their name. Gurū Arjan says, "*nirbhau hoe bheo nihaṅgā*: after becoming fearless he becomes *Nihaṅg*."<sup>11</sup> The word *Nihaṅg* here means

indifferent to the fear of death, dauntless and is derived from the Sanskrit word *Nisang*; (Puñjābī: Nihāng).

After the death of Gurū Gobind Singh, and even after the death of Baṇḍā Singh Bahādur when the Khālsā assembled at Amritsar in the year 1733 A.D. to celebrate Baisākhī festival, the Khālsā armies were reorganized into five Brigades. One of the five formed under the leadership of Bābā Dīp Singh and Bābā Gurbakhsh Singh, chose to call itself *Shahīdī Jathā* (Regiment of Living Martyrs), who had vowed to sacrifice their life for the Khālsā Panth, its freedom and integrity and covet nothing. They were to be warrior defenders of Faith and Warrior Missionaries, who had been trained in theology and disciplined in deeply religious and mystical life by Gurū Gobind Singh. Bābā Dīp Singh was an outstanding calligraphist, and is known to have prepared at least half a dozen copies of *Ādi Gurū Granth* and *Dasam Granth* with his own pen.

When the followers of Baṇḍā set up Baṇḍāi Cult of Red shirts and the slogan *Fateh Darśan*, instead of *Vāhi Gurū ji kī Fateh*, the Khālsā leaders who had spent their lifetime with Gurū Gobind Singh, and many of whom were even older than the tenth Gurū, called themselves *Tat Khālsā* (Essential Khālsā) of *Akāl Purkhīās* (Worshippers of *Akāl Purkh*). Mātā Suṇḍarī and Mātā Sāhib Devī in their letters addressed to the Sikhs call them *Akāl Purkh kī Khālsā* and their dear sons (*farzand puttār*). The word *Akāl Purkhīā* was later shortened to *Akālī*. *Shahīdī Khālsā*, *Nihāngs* and *Akāl Purkhīās* or *Akālīs* were terms which were synonymous and applied to the Pure and Noble Khālsā, for whom the highest ideals of Gurū Gobind Singh, as they understood from personal association with the tenth Gurū, really matter. They had their head-quarters at Damdamā, Anandpur and Amritsar. Bābā Dīp Singh was the first *Tat Khālsā* leader, who not merely fought on the defensive, but with a *Jathā* of 5000 horse attacked the Abdālī stronghold and nearly conquered them, but for the timely reinforcements they received. He had attacked them to establish the sanctity of Harimandir, and in the battle every warrior laid

down his life. It was followed by terrible attacks by his friend Bābā Gurbakhsh Singh, who was at that time at Anandpur. Bābā Gurbakhsh Singh also laid down his life in 1767, when with only 30 warriors he fought 30,000 Afghan forces to defend Akāl Takhat and Harimaṇdir. Nihāṅ Nainā Singh and Bābā Phulā Singh Akālī belonged to this Jathā. They repeatedly warned Ranjit Singh against the evil consequences of Mughal style government and life of his court, but the warnings went unheeded.

During the Gurdwārā Reform Movement, the Sikh leaders started a paper named *Akālī*. From the paper and its policy the leaders began to be called Akālīs, in view of which they formed the present Akālī party. These Nihāṅ Akālīs should not be confused with the members of the Akālī party. In the pre-partition (before 1947) period, the Akālī party produced leaders like Bābā Kharak Singh, Sardār Amar Singh, Editor *Sher-i-Punjab*, who were well-educated and belonged to very refined and cultured families. They suffered long prison terms and sacrificed their property for the sake of Sikh Community and its religious and political causes. But the post-partition leadership of this party is now in the hands of the illiterate Jathedārs, who have repeatedly compromised with the Communists or secretly with every ruling party for selfish ends. They have corrupted every institution, they are managing, and they have done everything to embarrass, oppose and even annihilate the Nihāṅ Khālsā and other religious missionary groups.

The Nihāṅs have suffered from three factors which continue to damage their reputation: (i) Lack of training in religious studies and organizational discipline. Many bad characters dress like Nihāṅs and indulge in criminal activities and bring bad name to their organizations. (ii) Lack of training in classical and modern weapons. They are supposed to be a standing Army of the Khālsā and yet they are not able to use the weapons like sword, *lathī*, *chakra*, gun, as Nihāṅs could do some decades ago. (iii) Over use of drugs like *bhang* (which they erroneously call *sukhnidhān*: treasure of happiness) has made many Nihāṅs, idle, irresponsible

and unfit for any useful function as missionaries. Nihāṅgs were known to be the best exponents and lovers of *Bāṇī* of Gurū Gobind Singh, but the present day Nihāṅgs rarely know much about the *Bāṇī* of Gurū Gobind Singh. Nowadays most of the Nihāṅgs are smart and good in their dress, but morally and spiritually they have failed to make better impression than the Akālī leaders, who with tons of money available from Gurdwārā funds are able to indulge in every conceivable sinful living in the name of Sikh religion and Panthic politics. The Nihāṅg leaders can still do much, first to reform their own organization internally and then help to remove the rot that has set in the body politics of Akālī Dal, or such organizations who instead of helping the cause of Sikhism are doing untold damage. Last year (1980) I was astounded to see the private collection of manuscripts of the saintly Nihāṅg Bābā Mit Singh at Nander (Hazūr Sāhib).<sup>12</sup>

#### BĀBĀ RĀM SINGH AND THE NĀMDHĀRĪ MOVEMENT (1816-1885 A.D.)

In the middle of the nineteenth century when Ranjīt Singh's Kingdom was crumbling; decay of morals and patriotism had reached its lowest ebb, Dogrā mercenaries were guillotining and annihilating the material and moral resources of the *Khālsā* Army, and when bureaucratic despotism and excessive indulgence in wine and sex had blinded responsible persons with greed and treachery, leading to a chain of assassinations, a young sensitive and saintly carpenter, who had joined the *Khālsā* Army as a common soldier, watched all this, and with boundless spiritual power derived from prayers, meditations, he shook the British rulers from the roots singlehandedly. He was called Bhāī Rām Singh when he was in the army and Bābā Rām Singh when he was accepted as the Religious leader of the Sikh Community.

Bābā Rām Singh was born on the day of spring festival in 1816. His father Jassā Singh and mother Sadā Kaur were simple and devout people. With an inborn instinct for piety and spiritual life,



Rām Singh studied Gurmukhī and Sikh Scriptures from a local priest. He met Nirmalā, Udāsī and some other saints in the hope of getting some real spiritual instructions, but found that they did not practice what they preached. Carpentry was highly skilled craftsmanship, which he learnt to the best of his ability from his father. Tall and attractive as he was, he was persuaded by his brother-in-law to join the Khālsā Army of Ranjīt Singh in 1836. He had now the opportunity to see all that was happening at Lāhore during the last days of Ranjīt Singh's reign.

On his way to Peshāwar, he met the well-known mystic saint Bābā Bālak Singh at Huzro, who trained seekers and gave them practical lessons in Sikh meditations: *Nām Simrin*. The novices were called *Jagiāsīs*: seekers, while those disciplined in meditations were called *Abhiāsīs*: Contemplatives, devoted to Nām-Simrin. Rām Singh was already a sincere seeker. He became an illumined mystic whose progress in spiritual advancement was phenomenal. In spite of achieving great heights of spiritual illumination, he was extremely regular in his daily prayers and meditations upto the last day of his life. Neither the days of glory and popularity, nor the hardship of 14 years of imprisonment deterred him in carrying out his mission and leading a very orderly life of continued meditations.

Bābā Rām Singh closely watched the decadence and fall of the Sikh Kingdom. He probably had the chance to meet the later great Saints like Bābā Bīr Singh, Bābā Khudā Singh, Bābā Mahārāj Singh and Akālī Phulā Singh, who did their best to uphold Khālsā traditions in religious life, but were made helpless by Mahārājā Ranjīt Singh's semi-feudal set up, in which the majority of the Sardārs had abandoned themselves to drinking like fish, having plural wives, keeping mistresses and private concubines, and adopting Brāhmanical rites and superstitions, which permitted everything sacred and profane so long as the Brāhmins were paid and their patrons, the Dogrās patronized, and saintly and devout Sikhs kept at a safe distance, or at the most given formal respect. Traitors could be seen everywhere and betrayals and treacherous

dealings had brought anarchy and chaos in the court leading to a chain of assassinations of the Princes and their backers.

On the one hand the Khālsā army vowed to drive the English back not only to Calcuttā but to London, on the other hand Ranjīt Singh's petty mercenaries, who were raised to the highest positions, now controlled the army and the fate of helpless *Rānīs* (Queens) and Princes of Ranjīt Singh. These Dogrās—Lāl Singh, Tej Singh, Gulāb Singh, Dhyān Singh, whose treachery has been vividly revealed by every British General and Army Officers, who fought against the Khālsā Army, were busy liquidating the Khālsā Army, and yet General Gough while admiring "the splendid gallantry of our fallen foe," says, "the Sikhs shook the Indian Empire to the base."

Great Religious divines and heroes felt that the Empire was lost because of characterless and anti-Sikh leadership and the moral degradation that had been introduced into the court and life of Sikh Sardārs. They felt that if this could be replaced, the power and prestige that slipped out of the hands of the Khālsā Army could still be redeemed. The great Sahajdhārī Sikh, Mool Rāj had the courage to say: "The religion and Government of the Khālsā are yet extant. I exist only as the servant of the Mahārājā." He died in British prison at the young age of 36. Bābā Mahārāj Singh was locked in dingy cell in Singapore and kept there in such a miserable condition that he was not given relief even when he became utterly blind and was reduced to mere skeleton. Even the Civil Surgeon's suggestion that he should be allowed to walk in the open was turned down. No medical relief was given even when his neck and tongue developed swelling. On the other hand, Bābā Mahārāj Singh was so noble that he had given instructions to his army, when he raised the banner of revolt against British annexation, that when they assault British cantonments they should not kill British officers, but should arrest them and bring them alive to him. He died in his dingy cell at Singapore in 1856 and Bābā Rām Singh knowing full well the consequences of his revolutionary moves started his movement in the same year.

Bābā Rām Singh's mystic personality attracted the seekers of religious inspiration, and his old comrades in the army joined him to build a bastion of freedom and non-cooperation against the alien rulers. Without any army, money and material, he could possibly not do much, but through prayers and meditations he had acquired boundless inner power and courage, and through prayer and meditations the whole Sikh Community could become an unprecedented revolutionary force.

The government reports of this period say, "Rām Singh's life of prayer and worship attracted all castes and creeds, and even Muslims could become Nāmdhārīs. But the chief converts were *Jāts*, *Tarkhāns*, *Chamārs* and *Mazhabīs*. Soḍhīs, Bedīs and cult gurūs, who were helping and seeking patronage and protection from the British, opposed him to please their new rulers. The Mahants were encouraged to treat the historical Sikh Shrines as their personal property."

Bābā Rām Singh abolished caste distinctions, advocated inter-marriage of classes, enjoined widow marriage, insisted on strict prohibition of wine, drugs and meat. To fight Brāhmanical customs and rites he advocated *Anand* marriage exactly as it was recorded in *Prem Sumārag*, a work written by a knowledgeable Sikh divine in the early four decades of eighteenth century. He set practical example and inspired every Sikh to rise up early in the morning, take bath, sit in meditation of *Nām Simrin*, recite certain daily prayers, which to this day in the Nāmdhārī Prayer Book (*Guthā*) includes *Sukhmanī* and *Akāl Ustatī*. He urged the people to boycott British goods and keep up cottage industry for the basic needs of clothes, oils and herbal medicines. His mystic touch inspired people with great puritan zeal, religious idealism, and many passed into ecstasy and started crying aloud, from which habit they got the sobriquet, *Kūkā*: Howlers. They thus became howling *dervishes* in Sikhism, but in the third generation the howling has completely stopped. Nāmdhārīs are now more sober than all other religious groups.

A Muslim secret agent reports, "Rām Singh is gifted with

magic powers, which sent people to ecstasy and even frenzy. In common with all other Sikhs, doubtless, Rām Singh wishes their rule back but he does not preach this, considers himself unquestionably a prophet and believes his preachings to be entirely religious in nature." Though Bābā Rām Singh was unquestionably the greatest illumined saint of the mid nineteenth century, he was to a considerable extent misguided on some issues by two books, which he accepted though with some element of doubt also, to be gospel truth. One of these books concerns his religious idealism and the other his political aspiration. It gave him a sense of mission and a prophetic urge to fight for the freedom of his people. The first book was *Prem Sumārag*, a remarkable work on the Sikh Code of Conduct and on Sikh polity written by an unknown author with orthodox ways of living, but liberal views on many issues, and at the same time with a strong conviction that the Sikhs would some day become a sovereign power and they must learn the basic rules of Sikh polity. It was written when Lakhpāt Rāi, the Hindu *Dīwān* of Zākariyā Khān and his son Yāhyā Khān ordered the destruction of all copies of *Ādi Gurū Granth* and Sikh literature, he could get hold of. In the absence of copies of *Ādi Gurū Granth*, *Anaṇd* marriages were performed around fire. So the *Anaṇd* marriages introduced by Bābā Rām Singh with *havan* are not his innovation, but were accepted literally from *Prem Sumārag*, which he considered the best compendium of *Khālsā Rehīt*.

The second book that gave hope and conviction to their revolutionary efforts was *Sau Sākhī*: Book of Hundred Prophecies. The British government ingeniously circulated copies, corrupted by hired scribes, and a member of Dhūpiā family was one of the persons in charge of these distortions. Sardār Attar Singh became the leading toady and quisling to oppose the Nāmdhārī movement. He translated a distorted version of *Sau Sākhī* and he writes in his Preface:

"Thanks to the Almighty, to whose unbounded kindness we owe the regeneration of this country, which the British nation has

effected so successfully. In publishing this work, I pray fervently and sincerely to God for Her Gracious Majesty, the Queen for her disinterested kindness in governing this kingdom. No one is acquainted with the cause of the Kūkā outbreak i.e. how they caused disturbance. The people of that caste (Carpenter) repeated few sentences of this book, which made them believe that Rām Singh was a prophet and that political disturbances are expected. I previously mentioned seditious designs of the Kūkās to British Officers several times. Again I submitted a statement to government on December 14, 1871. By the Will of God the same thing occurred immediately. In February 1872, I submitted another statement to the government. Although there are many other books, preached by Kūkās and I am searching them, but this is the principal book of their religion and was the cause of the late Sikh wars of Lāhore, and in future even this is worthy of being watched." Attar Singh mention the *Sākhīs* No: 9, 15, 17, 37, 41, 49, 50, 51, 58, 59, 60, 61, 63, 64, 68, 73, 74, 85, 86, 89, 96, 100 as disturbing.<sup>13</sup> Sardār Attar Singh's statement tells us where quisling and fawning toadies stood within a decade after the fall of Raṇjīt Singh's kingdom. They out Heroded Herod in their malicious attacks on Bābā Rām Singh and other religious reformers and freedom fighters.

One gentleman named Gaṇḍā Singh was employed by the British to circulate letters in the name of Bābā Rām Singh, which Dr M.L. Āhlūwālīā rightly calls the work of polluted mind to secure favour of their British Masters. Even the British Officers did not believe his reports. R.G. Taylor, Commissioner and Superintendent of Ambālā come nearer truth in his report of 1866, when he says, "The whole drift of his reformation is apparently to consolidate the powers of Sikhism with a view to political ends." Bābā Rām Singh's postal system through well-organized messengers baffled the British government. When he visited Anandpur with horsemen and 2500 followers on foot, singing the hymns of *Ādi Gurū Granth*, only 100 persons were allowed to accompany him to pay homage at the Takhat, where the priests

received him in a manner ordered by the British Officers. Bābā Rām Singh firmly stood on principles and condemned the un-Sikhlike practices of the priests. Ambālā, Ludhiānā, Ferozepur, Paṭiālā, Nābhā and many places in Mājha came under his influence. He appointed 22 Regional Missionaries whom he called *Sūbās*, who were staunch and faithful followers, and became his eyes and ears throughout the length and breadth of the country.

"After occupation, the British officers and Christian missionaries indulged in activities within the precincts of the Golden Temple, which were meant to humiliate the Sikhs and cause injury to their religious sentiments. Such uncivilized behaviour was strongly resented by all sections of the Sikh community. Cow slaughter, which had been prohibited by Ranjit Singh and against which even the *Misal* leaders fought vigorously, was permitted. The Sikhs never worshipped the cow or the bullock, nor did they consider it sacred in the Brāhmaṇical sense, but these domestic animals were as important for their life as any kith and kin in the human world." On March 24, 1847, the Governor General made the following proclamation: "This is to make known to all concerned by the order of the Governor General, British subjects are forbidden to enter the temple called the *Darbār* with shoes on. The kins are not to be killed at Amritsar." Soon after complete annexation this order was reversed by another order which stated, "No one should be allowed to interfere with the practice by his neighbour, which that neighbour's religion permits." Under this order the Muslims were encouraged to indulge in cow slaughter to such an extent that they started hawking beef in the areas where only Sikhs and Hindus were living both in Amritsar and Lāhore. The protests of the Hindu and Sikhs fell on deaf ears. The Nāmdhārīs attacked the butchers and killed four of them. When innocent people were arrested on the basis of wrong information and mercilessly tortured. Bābā Rām Singh advised the Nāmdhārī killers to save innocent people by making a clean confession which they immediately did. There was further killing of butchers in three

more places, and those who were arrested went to the gallows singing joyfully. These courageous protests against wilful humiliations and injury to Sikh and Hindu sentiments brought about a sensational awakening. On January 13, 1872, Mr. Cowen, Deputy Commissioner Ludhiānā, arrested Nāmdhārīs and without any trial cut them to pieces by making them targets of cannon fire. Cowen's wife, who along with other ladies of English officers was watching the brutal killing, felt pity for a 12 year old handsome boy. She asked her husband to release him, who agreed if the boy repented. The boy sprang like tiger on Cowen and held his beard and throat with both hands so tightly that half a dozen soldiers could not free Cowen from his strangle hold. He was cut to pieces to loosen the grip and save Cowen's life. This action of Cowen was condemned by *London Times* and by members of the British Parliament. Upto this point the authorities admit that there was no evidence against Bābā Rām Singh to put him on trial. It was the saddest day in Bābā Rām Singh's life. He was arrested and sent to exile as State prisoner in Merguī, where he maintained contacts with his revolutionaries.

On the basis of dubious intelligence reports, Dr Gaṇḍā Singh in his article in *The Sikh Review* tried to prove with his usual angular logic that Rām Singh was a timid and helpless tool in the hands of his fanatic followers. This is a highly prejudicial, uncharitable and noxious comment, refuted by all reliable records and opinions of British officers who met Bābā Rām Singh and watched the movement closely. Mr. Macnabb, who studied Bābā Rām Singh closely and was an eye-witness to the movement, wrote in 1872, "No one, who has seen and talked with Rām Singh will have failed to observe an intelligence, firmness and decision of character, which coupled with great restraint do not belong to a mere religious enthusiast, still less to a puppet."

In his letters from prison some of which are available in the form of crude and even incorrect English translations in the National Archives, a remarkable personality emerges. About 60 of these letters were unearthed by Saṁt Tehal Singh and published by

him in the late thirties. Sant Tehal Singh spent the last years of his life at Ludhiānā with Sardār Gurmukh Singh Industrialist, and was kind enough to give me correct form of the letters. Printing mistakes had crept into the letters, printed by him and subsequently by Dr Ganḍā Singh in his *Kūkiān dī Vūhiā*. Out of these letters Bābā Rām Singh's personality emerges as a very great, if not the most outstanding saint and political revolutionary of the nineteenth century. The Sardārs, who had acquired titles, *jagīrs* and position from the destroyers of the Sikh kingdom, dubbed him as a petty carpenter, and yet they crawled on all four before British Imperialists, who are followers of another petty carpenter, Christ. If Christ had been something akin to Jāts, they would have established some racial and cultural relations also with the British. Bābā Rām Singh once told a learned Brāhmin, "I was a poor carpenter. By contemplating the Name of God and reciting *Ādi Gurū Granth*, I have become so important that all castes follow me, and even the mighty British Empire is afraid of me. If a learned Brāhmin like you follows the *Ādi Gurū Granth* and lives the life of contemplation of God, you can rise to much greater height of spiritual achievements." The following extracts from Bābā Rām Singh's letters throw light on his beliefs and practices:

(1) All Sikhs must memorize at least *Japujī*, *Jāpū Sāhib*, *Rehīrās*, *Ārtī Sohilā*, *Śabad Hazāre*, *Āsā dī Vār* and *Sukhmanī*. While reciting the *Gurbānī*, even in prison, I feel cheerful and in peace. The only sorrow I feel constantly is separation from *Sādḥ Saṅgat*: congregation of saintly men.

(2) To rise early and spend the early hours of dawn from 3 a.m. to 6.30 a.m. in *Nām Simrin*. Contemplation of the Name of God is as meritorious as giving jewels and gold in charity.

(3) I am not a Gurū. I am just a humble messenger of the Gurū. It is for you to believe in what Gurūjī says in the *Ādi Gurū Granth* and it is for the Gurū to bestow grace and faith on true seekers.

(4) *Soḍhis*, *Bedīs*, *Pujārīs*, priests and preachers are facing moral death and degradation because they do not recite *Gurbānī*, nor do they contemplate God's Name.



(5) Do not hurt anyone's feelings. Do not be rude to anyone. Be compassionate and forgiving. If anyone shouts at you, endure silently. Even if some misguided person hurts and harms you, forgive him.

(6) Pray inwardly, silently and sometime vocally. The more you contemplate the Name of God, the more will He reveal inwardly and intuitionally the techniques of Nām Simrin.

(7) I first became a follower of an Udāsī Sādhū, and then a Nirmalā Sādhū. I got no inner peace or enlightenment from them. Then I took the Khālsā baptism of the double-edged sword. I then received inspiration for correct meditation of God's Name. I have achieved such inward peace now that even in exile and prison I am happy.

(8) These people (the Britishers) are terribly afraid of me. Their own misdeeds and guilty conscience are the main causes of that fear, while I am in prison. They feared that I would capture Puñjāb and Delhī, as the Sikhs did earlier in history.

(9) It is perhaps the Will of God that the Khālsā should suffer. So they have suffered and may continue to suffer. Gurū Gobind Singh also gave divine assurance to the Khālsā that he would protect them, embolden them. This also will surely come to pass, when He Wills it so.

(10) I am not in the least afraid if the British government takes strict measures against me and keep me in confinement with their guns always pointed towards me. The separation from my saintly brothers is the only thing that I feel.

(11) No one associated with our *Satsang* should accept employment under the British government.

(12) If you want to know my views of Khālsā Code of Conduct, read the *Ādi Gurū Granth*, *Prem Sumārag*, *Sau Sākhī* and recite *Gurbānī* (the whole of *Pañj Granthī*) everyday.<sup>14</sup>

Bābā Rām Singh died peacefully at 4.30 p.m. on November 29, 1885 A.D. after a short illness. Upto his last breath he refused to take medicine from the British Medical Officer attending him. He readily took herbal medicines, which were unfortunately

neither administered, nor easily available. During the 14 years of his imprisonment on sea coast in Merguī, no one was allowed to meet him. Two Brāhmin attendants cremated him under British supervision.<sup>15</sup>

It was a pity that thousands of so-called writers and historians tried to mutilate the true image of this greatest Sikh Saint and revolutionary of the nineteenth century. It was Bābā Rām Singh's misfortune that his keenest admirers and members of his own family, in their zeal to become the spiritual leaders of the whole Sikh Community, further misrepresented him and were unable either to maintain the spiritual fervour and mystic greatness of Bābā Rām Singh or his revolutionary zeal. Some scholars have published some documents and books on his political activities, but they have failed to interpret his religious ideas and personality. Some day, some scholars will go deeper and study all aspects of his personality, and free him from the fiction and falsehood that has been constructed around him. He will certainly emerge as a unique and inspiring religious and political leader of the Khālsā Panth. His spiritual greatness and political achievements were matchless in the context of the dark period of British occupation and subsequent annexation of the Puñjāb.

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- (3) Account of *Nirmalā* Missionary Sect is based on:
  - (i) *Dastūr al Amal Dharma Dhuḡā Akhārā Nirmalīān Kā*; (ii) Ganeshā Singh, *Nirmal*

- Bhūshan*; (iii) Giān Singh, *Nirmal Pañth Pradīpkā*; (iv) Kāhan Singh, *Mahān Kosh*; (v) Sañt Nihāl Singh, *Nirmal Prabhākar*, (vi) Nihāl Singh Nirmalā, *Nirmal Sampardāi Prakāsh*; (vii) James Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*.
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- (5) Dr Surain Singh Wilkhū, *Bhāi Adḍan Shāh: Jīwan te Rachnā*, p. 1.
- (6) For details see *Kār Sewā of Historical Gurdwārās*.
- (7) Account of Adḍan Shāhī Sewā Pañthī Missionary Sect is based on : (i) Bābā Shām Singh, *Bhagat Prem Prakāsh*; (ii) Bhāi Vir Singh, *Sañt Gāthā*; (iii) Bhāt Sewā Rām, *Parchī Mahā Suñder Sachīār Kī*; (iv) Sākhiān Adḍan Jī (British Museum, Ms. No. 14162, d-42); (v) Sañt Lāl Chand, *Sri Rattan Mālā*; (vi) Kavi Santokh Singh, *Sūraj Parkāsh*; and (vii) Kāhan Singh, *Mahān Kosh*.
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## CHAPTER 21

### ADVERSARIES OF SIKHISM

All the Sikh Gurūs from Nānak to Gurū Gobīnd Singh were one in spirit and thought; we have already given the contemporary evidence of Gurū Gobīnd Singh, Bhāī Naṇḍ Lāl, Kavī Saināpati and Sewā Dās in Chapter 7. All the Sikh Gurūs were one in Spirit; their Spiritual Sovereignty was immutable and indivisible, and they all presented Sikhism as One Treasure House of Wisdom and One Divine Illumination. Even during the times of the Gurūs there was no dearth of false prophets who had set themselves as *Satgurūs* and direct descendants of Gurū Nānak, or some subsequent Gurū, and there always were sufficient ignorant fools to follow them, and there still are many born in Sikh families, who have accepted the tempting offers of the false prophets and rejected the true Gurūs and true prophets.

Before he breathed his last, Gurū Gobīnd Singh firmly declared to the *Khālsā* that after him there shall be no human Gurū in Sikhism and the *Ādi Gurū Granth* shall be the true Eternal Gurū, while the *Pañj Piārās* would act as the human instruments of this Eternal Gurū to initiate, baptize and give *gurū mantra* and spiritual instructions. No individual could either baptize a Sikh in any way nor act in the place of Pañj Piārās or place him above *Ādi Gurū Granth* by calling himself *Satgurū* or *Pūran Gurū* (perfect prophet).

### HOW INGROUPS SETTING UP RIVAL GURUSHIP BECAME REJECTED GROUPS IN SIKHISM

There were two dark periods in Sikh history when there were no printing presses and hand written copies of *Ādi Gurū Granth* were

very rare. Sikh Religious Institutions had been virtually destroyed by occupation forces; first of the Mughal and Afghān and then by the British in nineteenth century, and saints who failed to be good saints, set themselves up as perfect prophets: Pūran Gurūs and Satgurūs. The humble, ignorant and uneducated people in search of some solace and peace fell easy victims of these easily available gurūs in the religious market till truth was revealed by enlightened Sikh scholars and saints. The first such period was immediately after the death of Gurū Gobind Singh when about a dozen false prophets, *Bāndaīs*, *Ajūt-Matīās*, *Gulāb-Rāiyās*, *Haṇḍāhiyās* set themselves to be not only prophets, but even greater prophets than Gurū Nānak and Gurū Gobind Singh. Within the next four or five decades they either became confirmed enemies of the Sikhs, or perished in shame and humiliation, or retraced their steps. The second wave of setting up Pūran Gurūs and false prophets came under the patronage of the British, who did everything to confuse the Sikhs about Sikhism, and corrupt their moral and spiritual ideas and even the Sikh Institutions as much as they possibly could. But idealistic religious movements swept these forces of reaction and corruption aside. It is a pity that even though Bābā Rām Singh and Bābā Dayāl Dās never called themselves gurūs, long after their death their successors gave out that they were Pūran Satgurūs, because in the mushroom growth of gurūs in the second half of the nineteenth century they wished to lead in the race. As historical truths of Sikh history and scriptures are coming to light, it is becoming increasingly difficult for these perfect Satgurūs to face the inescapable reality of history, and in a decade or so it will be impossible for them to hold their pretensions of acting as Popes or Gurūs of the Sikhs, as it would be for a Miss India to declare that she is the Queen of England by merely putting on the false robes and the false crown of the Queen of England. But as even the poorest shepherd can get some black sheep to follow him in dire personal necessity in this vast world population, every false and impostor gurū or person claiming to be the Pope and Supreme Authority over the Sikhs

in Western Hemisphere as Yogī Bhajan, leader of 3 HO Tāntric cult thriving in the name and garb of Sikhism does, will easily find a few thousand followers. It is not the principles of Sikhism that suffer, but the unfortunate morally blind victims of these crafty cults, led by the blind.

In Hindu society even a person who teaches carpentry, shoe-making or music is addressed as gurū by the student. Sikh scholars who studied Saṅskṛit, Braj, began to call their teachers *Vidyā-Gurū*, as even Kavī Santokh Singh does. But they never put up these Vidyā Gurūs as their spiritual preceptors. Only the ten Gurūs and the *Ādi Gurū Granth* were accepted as the Pūran Gurū: Perfect Gurū. We have already quoted in the foregoing chapter, how the Udāsīs and the Nirmalās have vowed to accept only *Ādi Guru Granth* as the Supreme Gurū and Authority over them. It is fundamentally on this issue that many cults born out of the inspiration of *Ādi Gurū Granth* became rejected groups in Sikhism till their votaries repented and came to the fold of the *Khālsā* or other Sikh Institutions mentioned in Chapter 20.

Some of these rejected cults have now declared that they are Hindus although they still keep Sikh forms, Sikh names and use Sikh Scriptures for projecting their image. Hinduism has unfortunately never defined itself, and from the most immoral and criminal cults to false prophets of other faiths, who are rejected by them, find Hinduism convenient ground where they can pitch their camp and not only become gurūs, but they can even declare themselves as *Jagat-Gurūs* (World Gurūs), *Bhagwāns*, *Narāyāṇas*, and are free to apply to themselves the thousand Names of God found in *Sahasarnāma*. No one can object, but every Hindu either remains silent or accepts. But Sikhism is not Hinduism. Sikhism not only strongly rejects it, but vigorously opposes it. In Hinduism every Brāhmiṇ considers himself to be a born gurū and every holyman becomes a gurū, and it is a pity that Sikh movements started by Bābā Dayāl Dās in Sahajdhārī tradition and by Bābā Rām Singh in the *Khālsā* tradition fought against all Brāhmanical rites and ceremonies, but after the death of the

leaders of these movements, both the Nāmdhārī and Nirañkāri movements fell an easy prey to this cancerous Brāhmaṇical evil of becoming a Gurū and Satgurū. Had this not happened, the Nirañkāri successors of Bābā Dayāl and Nāmdhārī successors of Bābā Rām Singh would have held complete sway over religious minds of the Sikhs. They would have been indispensable leaders of the *Khālāsā Panth*. But as Satgurūs of a few of their blind believers they stand isolated, open to further splits and deviations.

#### THE MĪNĀ CULT: PRITHĪ MAL, MEHARBĀN, HARJĪ

Prithī Mal was the over-ambitious eldest son of Gurū Rām Dās, who took it for granted that according to primogeniture rights, he would be this father's successor. But even Gurū Rām Dās blessed the youngest son, Arjan Dev, and showed repeated disappointment with the mental and moral tendencies of Prithī Mal. Fearing that he may be bypassed, Prithī Mal became aggressive and even quarrelled with his father, Gurū Rām Dās, who calmly reprimanded him in one of his hymns saying, "Why are you quarrelling with your own father son? It is a sin to quarrel with your Elders, who have given you birth and brought you up."<sup>1</sup> He was justly ignored and Gurū Arjan was installed the fifth Gurū.

When Gurū Rām Dās handed over the articles of spiritual regalia to Bhāī Buddhā and asked him to anoint his youngest son, Arjan Mal, as his successor, Prithī Mal rudely confronted Bhāī Buddhā and said:

Listen O old Man,  
I know you very well;  
You are praised  
As companion of Gurū Nānak;  
I am the eldest son,  
And deserved to be set  
On the pontific throne of the Gurū.  
You have not done the right thing;  
You are an old man now,

And have lost all sense of discrimination;  
 I conducted all the administration.  
 What have you done old Man?  
 You have anointed Arjan as the successor.  
 If I do what I must do  
 You will have to face dishonour and humiliation;  
 I will wrest control of the pontific throne.

Kavī Sañtokh Singh, *Sūraj Prakāsh*, Rās. 2, *Añsū*. 22.

The hostility of the *Mīnā* Sodhis (Prithī Mal and Meharbān) continued to the end of the life of the great Patriarch, who was respected as a great Apostle and contemporary of Gurū Nānak by all the Sikh Gurūs.

Prithī Mal chased Gurū Arjan like a dark pestering shadow, maligning him, misleading Sikhs against him, seeking to oust him with the religious patronage of the Hindus and political patronage of the Mughals. He did not succeed for two reasons. First, Akbar had met him and seen him, and could not allow any persecution of the Gurū. Secondly, two Mughal Officers who were brought from Lāhore on some plea to expel Gurū Arjan out of Amritsar, which he claimed as his own inherited city, died on the way, the distance of about 40 miles. But as soon as Jahāngīr came to the throne, Gurū Arjan's enemies inflamed the fanatic wrath of the Emperor, and by bringing false allegations and making utterly false reports about his teachings and corrupting both Hinduism and Islām, which Jahāngīr was made to believe. Gurū Arjan was also projected as his political enemy and an accomplice of his son Khusrō, who it is said, had revolted against his father.

After the martyrdom of Gurū Arjan on May 30, 1606 A.D. Jahāngīr realized his mistake and tried to befriend Gurū Hargobīnd. Prithī Mal accepted Gurū Arjan as the fifth Gurū, but declared himself as the sixth Gurū, thinking that it would be easy for him to oust the 12 years old successor, Gurū Hargobīnd. But he failed. His son Meharbān, whom Bhāī Manī Singh accuses to be the first to corrupt *Janam Sākhī* by projecting Gurū Nānak as the



*avatār* of Janak and introducing baseless legends in place of historical facts, became the seventh *Mīnā* Gurū, and his son Harjī, the eighth *Mīnā* Gurū. The sobriquet *Mīnā* was given to Prithī Mal and his successors, his *Masaṇds* and his followers by Bhāī Gurdās and Bābā Buḍḍhā. They first openly denounced this cult and then Bhāī Gurdās wrote a whole *Vār* (Canto) against them, completely demolishing them and declaring them to be the enemies of Sikhism and dwellers of hell: *Nark-Paṇthī*.

The more pacific Gurū Arjan remained, the more aggressive and violent was the attitude of Prithī Mal and Meharbān. Every time Gurū Arjan sent Bhāī Buḍḍhā and Bhāī Gurdās for reconciliation and peaceful family relations, Prithī Mal and Meharbān insulted them and were extremely rude to them. When they made an all out bid to bribe the *Masaṇds* and win the support of the Mughal authorities to capture the control of Amritsar, Bhāī Gurdās exposed them by writing a whole *Vār* (Canto) of stirring verses, exposing their hypocrisy, duplicity, meanness and wicked deeds thus:

*tirath majhī nīvāsū hai bagulā aptīnā.*

*lawai babīhā varsdai jal jāi na pīnā.*

The *Mīnās* are as hypocritical as the Cranes.

Who dwell in holy rivers cheating

By their pretensions on places of pilgrimage.

The True Gurū is the King of kings.

The *Mīnās* are spiritless evil persons

Whose faces are blackened with evil deeds.

Just as a Jackal who jumped into the vat

Of a dyer, changed his external appearance,

And posing as King of the Jungle

He frightened all animals into submission;

But when the Jackal opened his mouth,

His utterances exposed him.

Such are the false and mischievous *Kapūta*, *Mīnās*.

They are without character and honour

And will be chastised and exposed in the Court of God.

How can a *Mīṇā* glow worm ever face  
The Light of ever shining Moon?  
How can a *Mīṇā*, who is like a drop of water  
Ever be equal to the vast Sea (the true Gurū).  
You stand condemned from the divine Source, O *Mīṇās*.  
You are doomed to hell.

Just as a prostitute is beautiful  
But her black heart and soul  
Pushes her lover to the pit.  
So the companionship of *Mīṇās*  
Pushes a person to the pit of sorrow and suffering.

How do you distinguish the True Gurū  
From the *Mīṇā* hypocrites.  
*Mīṇās* are like counterfeit coins.  
They are like condemned and repudiated *Pīrs*  
Who get shoe-beating wherever they go.

Without possessing any moral or spiritual qualities  
These *Mīṇās* proclaim themselves to be Gurūs of the Sikhs.

Bhāi Gurdās, *Vār. 36, Pauṛīs 1-3, 5, 8, 11.*

The *Mīṇās* were highway robbers of Rājasthān, and Prithī Mal and his progeny were considered highway robbers, because they robbed the genuine seekers of their wealth by their false propaganda, and also plagiarized the lines from hymns of earlier Gurūs and Bhagtas, and by distorting them or jumbling them into new compositions they robbed the Sikhs of the real scriptures.

It is an established fact that the decision to compile the *Ādī Granth* (*Pothī*: Holy Book) was made when it was detected that the *Mīṇā* Soḍhīs had started mixing their own hack-work and imitation verses (*Kachī Bāṇī*) in authentic Gurbāṇī. Kesar Singh Chhiber in his *Bansāvalīnāmā Dasān Pātsahīān Kā* writes:

“Meharbān, son of Prithī Mal, started composing poetry. He was educated in Persian, Hīndvī, Sanskrit and Puñjābī. He composed his own *Bāṇī* with the signature line of Nānak. The bards ignorantly started singing it as real Bāṇī. These Mīṇā Soḍhīs set up their own *durbār* and prepared their own *Grañth*. They put into their *Grañth*, the Bāṇī of earlier Gurūs.”<sup>2</sup>

When Gurū Arjan heard the bards ignorantly singing Mīṇā Bāṇī as real Bāṇī, he addressed Bhāī Gurdās and said, “These Mīṇās are corrupting Gurbāṇī by mixing their own fake Bāṇī in it. This we will not permit.” Thus Bhāī Gurdās was asked to collect all the authentic Pothīs. Sarūp Dās Bhallā also writes in his *Mehmā Parkāsh*: Gurū Arjan immediately commanded Bhāī Gurdās to collect all Bāṇī Pothīs. Compile the True Gurbāṇī. Include in it the Bhagat Bāṇī, and take out the fake Bāṇī: *Kachī Bāṇī*.<sup>3</sup>

Dr Kirpāl Singh presents inauthentic ideas without genuine evidence when he says that Meharbān’s *Janam Sākhī* was considered genuine, and only his father was dubbed as Mīṇā and not Meharbān, and that the Mīṇā compositions are spiritual and theological masterpieces.<sup>4</sup> When Prithī Mal, Meharbān’s father and Harjī, Meharbān’s son are recorded as Mīṇā even in Mīṇā records, and also as the 6th, 7th, 8th gurūs of the Mīṇā cult, how can Meharbān not be called as a leader of the Mīṇā cult and Prithī Mal’s successor. Kavī Santokh Singh reports in *Sūraj Prakāsh* that Meharbān opposed the Gurūship of Gurū Hargobīnd with the same vehemence with which his father opposed Gurū Arjan.<sup>5</sup>

In his Vār 36, quoted above, Bhāī Gurdās says that compared to the true Gurū (Arjan and Gurū Hargobīnd), the Mīṇās were like Jackals, who have put on the colour of ferocious animals, but they are revealed to be cowardly imitators as soon as they open their mouth. His main accusation is that the Mīṇās call themselves gurūs without any quality or virtue of the true Gurū: *vin guṇ gurū sadāende*.<sup>6</sup> *Sadāende* is plural and applies both to Prithī Mal and Meharbān. Gurū Arjan also condemned the *Janam Sākhī* of the Mīṇās, and asked Bhāī Gurdās to write the first Vār to remove the misunderstandings created by Meharbān’s *Janam Sākhī*. The

allegation against this Janam Sākhī recorded by Bhāi Manī Singh in his own Janam Sākhī and his *Sikhān dī Bhagatmālā* is that they make people believe that Gurū Nānak was avatār of Rājā Janak, and they have put in their own fictitious *Sākhīs* and removed almost all *Sākhīs* about Gurū Nānak's visit to Meccā and Baghdād, probably to please the Muslim rulers. The author of Janam Sākhī is Meharbān whose work is known as a corrupt Mīṇā version, which Sikhs should ignore.<sup>7</sup>

The Janam Sākhīs, the *Goshṭīs*, the imitative Bāṇī as written by Prithī Mal, Meharbān and his son Harjī stood condemned and anathematized by the Sikhs. At first, Prithī Mal claimed to be the fifth Gurū of the Sikhs, but a sustained campaign against them carried on by Bhāi Buḍḍhā and Bhāi Gurdās ousted them out of Amritsar. The supreme sacrifice of Gurū Arjan in suffering martyrdom with divine calmness and endurance put the Mīṇās in the shade. But when Prithī Mal found the 11-12 years old Hargobiṇḍ installed as sixth Gurū, he felt that he could easily oust him as successor of his father. So Prithī Mal started captioning his imitative Bāṇī as *Mahallā* Sixth, and when he died, his son Meharbān started calling himself the seventh Gurū, while Meharbān's son Harjī became the 8th Gurū. After that their gurūship faded away. In the name of Nānak VI, VII and VIII they composed hymns, plagiarizing and changing the verses of *nirgun upāsānā* to *sargun upāsānā* in praise of Kṛṣṇa and Rāma. They stole so much of it and intimated so much of the Bāṇī of earlier Gurūs that Gurū Arjan had to compile a correct version. I am firmly of the opinion that because the Mīṇās wrote hymns under the name of Nānak VI, VII, VIII, the real successors of Gurū Nānak who rightly were Nānak VI (Gurū Hargobiṇḍ), Nānak VII (Gurū Hari Rāi), Nānak VIII (Gurū Hari Krishan) never wrote any hymn, which made it easier for the Sikhs to discard the hymns of Mīṇās under the name of Nānak VI, VII, VIII. Thus we find that the Bāṇī under *Mahallā* Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth is all Mīṇā Bāṇī.

When Gurū Hargobiṇḍ went to Kīratpur in the year 1634 A.D. it was Meharbān who took over the control of the Harimaṇḍir,

(*Darbār Sāhib*) Amritsar with the help of the Mughal authorities, and it remained under the control of Miñās for the next 60 years or so. It was Meharbān's son Harjī Miñā who closed the doors of the Harimaṇdir (now the Golden Temple), when Gurū Tegh Bahādur came to pay homage to the holy shrine in the city, where he was born and spent his childhood. When the women of Amritsar led a mass protest, then Harjī Miñā relented. When Gurū Hargobind was fighting against the Mughal forces, Meharbān patronized the Mughal rulers, and even started calling himself and his followers Bhagtiās. The word Bhagtiās does not mean *Bhagats* (saints) but *Vaiṣṇavas*. In his *Vār*.I, Bhāi Gurdās describes the Yogīs and Vaiṣṇavas at Achal Baṭālā, he calls the Vaiṣṇavas, Bhagtiās. Harjī Miñā wrote a *Sukhmanī* to match with the *Sukhmanī* of Gurū Arjan, which is full of Vaiṣṇavas ideals of Kṛṣṇa cult and Rāma cult. It shows how far they had drifted from Sikhism under the spiritual leadership of Meharbān, whose real name was Manohar Dās. The Miñās continued to act as anti-Sikh forces even during the lifetime of Gurū Gobind Singh. That was the reason their social boycott was ordered till they mended their ways.

Meharbān died on January 18, 1640 and Harjī died on April 17, 1696 leaving three sons Hargopāl, Kanval Nain and Nirañjan Rāi. Within the next three years they quarrelled among themselves. In the annual gathering of Baisākhī 1700 A.D., the Amritsar *Sanḡat* appealed to Gurū Gobind Singh to take over the administration of Harimaṇdir, (*Darbār Sāhib*) Amritsar from the Miñās, who had brought the reputation of Gurū Nānak's faith to the lowest level. Gurū Gobind Singh immediately sent Bhāi Manī Singh along with five prominent Sikhs, Bhūpat Singh, Gulzār Singh Chandra, Koer Singh, Dān Singh, Kirat Singh. All suffered martyrdom along with Bhāi Manī Singh for the sanctity of Amritsar in June 1734 A.D. They were given an authentic copy of *Ādi Gurū Granth* by Gurū Gobind Singh to replace the corrupted version, which was read and recited during Miñā control. They were also given the *Khālsā* flag, (*Nishān Sāhib*), to be hoisted opposite Akāl Takhat. They hoisted the flag and took over the

control early in June on the martyrdom day of Gurū Arjan. For the first time the baptism of the double-edged sword was performed at Akāl Takḥat on that day, and many people were baptized and made members of the Khālsā Brotherhood. The Mīṇās quietly left Amritsar without the least resistance and settled in Mālwa. Some of the Mīṇā descendants of Prithī Mal entered the Udāsī Order, while others later entered the Khālsā Holy Order. The Mīṇās are now extinct and their cult is dead. The Mīṇā tribe in Rājasthān, incidentally had become a highly respected class, and there are Mīṇā M.L.A.'s and Ministers.<sup>8</sup>

### DHĪR MAL AND HIS FOLLOWERS

Dhīr Mal was elder son of Bābā Gurdittā and elder brother of Gurū Hari Rāi. He was a little obstinate and always overestimated his ability and spiritual status. Because of the strong warning of his grandfather against embarrassing Gurū Hari Rāi and also because of his mother's noble influence, Dhīr Mal avoided confrontation with Gurū Hari Rāi. On the other hand, he gave him a good reception and entertained him for a month or so, when Gurū Hari Rāi came to Doābā on his way to Goīndwāl. But when Gurū Hari Krishan declared that his successor was at Bakālā, he set himself as the legitimate Bābā of Bakālā, although he had never lived in Bakālā earlier. When he failed to achieve his end and Gurū Tegh Bahādur was declared the ninth Gurū, Dhīr Mal forcibly tried to acquire the articles of spiritual regalia under the advice of his notorious Masaṇd, Śihān. Upto the middle of eighteenth century the following were his descendants:

Dhīr Mal  
 Behar Chand  
 Nirañjan Rāi  
 Bikram Singh  
 Rām Singh  
 Vadhbhāg Singh

When Sikhs and Hindus of all denominations suffered persecution and even Puñjābī Muslims were not spared by the invaders, Dhīr Mal's great grandson, Bikram Singh entered the Khālsā Holy Order and gave up the cult postures of Dhīr Mal. An outstanding descendant of Dhīr Mal was Bikram Singh's grandson Sodhī Vadhbhāg Singh. Ahmad Shāh Abdālī's military governor Jahān Khān attacked Kartārpur, the stronghold of Sodhī Vadhbhāg Singh and his Persian soldiers beat him so much that he was at the door of death. Nāsir Alī, governor of Jalandhar, pulled down the Kartārpur temple, polluted it by slaughtering cows and forcibly converted many Hindu and Sikh women to Islām, and worked havoc in the neighbourhood of Kartārpur. Subsequently, Sodhī Vadhbhāg Singh joined the *Misal Sardārs* and avenged the sack of Kartārpur by capturing Jalandhar and burning Nāsir Ali and other culprits alive. The women forcibly converted were restored to their homes.

Since then the relations between the descendants of Dhīr Mal and the Khālsā Pañth have been one of the Ingroup in Sikhism. They have given up the cult activities of Dhīr Mal, and ceased to oppose the mainstream of Sikh faith on fundamental issues and principles.<sup>9</sup>

#### BĀBĀ RĀM RĀI AND HIS FOLLOWERS

Bābā Rām Rāi was elder son of Gurū Hari Rāi, the seventh Gurū of the Sikhs and nine years older than Gurū Hari Krishan. He was different from Prithī Mal and Dhīr Mal in many ways. He was dutiful son and continued to remember his father with the utmost reverence even after he was rejected as his successor.

Rām Rāi was hardly 14 years old when he was sent to Aurangzeb's court to interpret Sikhism. Misguided by his notorious Masand, Gurbakhsh, at whose hands he was to subsequently suffer an untimely tragic death, he succumbed to sacrilegious compromises with Aurangzeb. Against the wishes of his father, he showed occult power just to win political and

material favours and cheap popularity in the Imperial Court. Rām Rāi also prolonged his stay in Aurangzeb's court beyond the deadline set by his father. When Aurangzeb once questioned him about the meaning of a hymn in *Ādi Granth*, concerning the Muslim customs to bury the dead and then expecting the dead to rise on doomsday, Rām Rāi out of fear of being misunderstood on this doctrinal issue, changed the line from "*miṭī musalmān kī*: the clay of a Muslim's grave," to "*miṭī beīmān kī*: clay of the faithless and unbeliever." Gurū Hari Rāi had given to Ram Rāi an authentic autographed copy of *Ādi Granth* which is still preserved in Rām Rāi's *ḍerā* at Dehrādūn, and Rām Rāi was expected to quote correctly from it. By changing the lines of Gurū Nānak's hymns under apprehensive dread, he had committed sacrilegious act, which could not be forgiven on the mere asking for verbal forgiveness. He was the Gurū's son, and he was expected to uphold the sanctity of *Ādi Granth* at the cost of his life.

It goes to the credit of Rām Rāi that he remained a very dutiful son. But once more he fell a victim to the evil persuasions of his Masaṇd, Gurbakhsh, who urged him to capture the pontifical throne from his younger brother, Hari Krishan, who was hardly seven years old then. He sought Aurangzeb's help for it. Aurangzeb summoned Gurū Hari Krishan to Delhī to test his spiritual influence and greatness, before he could decide on the issue. Mirzā Rājā Jāi Singh whose influence on Mughal Court and Delhī social circles was tremendous, entertained Gurū Hari Krishan as his guest, and the people and the nobles of Delhī, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were so attracted by the compassion and magnetic personality of Gurū Hari Krishan that Aurangzeb had no other choice except to offer his patronage to Rām Rāi and recognize Gurū Hari Krishan as the Gurū of the Sikhs.

Rām Rāi stayed on at Delhī for 20 years but shifted to Dehrādūn, where he had built a small summer retreat for meditations called *Dehrā Rām Rāi*. It is around this hermitage, the city of Dehrādūn has grown and is named after his *Dehrā* (Monastery), *Dūn* means a valley. After the martyrdom of Gurū



Tegh Bahādūr, Rām Rāi left Delhī and spent the rest of his life at Dehrādūn and never visited Delhī nor did he meet Aurangzeb again. At Dehrādūn he spent long hours in the ecstasy of *samādhī* so much so that he often lost consciousness of his body. He married four wives in order to have a son as his successor, but none of his four wives gave birth to any child. When Gurū Gobīnd Singh went to Pāontā Sāhib, a place only 10 miles from Dehrādūn across the Jamunā river, Rām Rāi met the young Gurū and apprised him of the attitude of the Masaṇds towards him. A year later in the year 1687 A.D., Rām Rāi was lifted by his Masaṇds, while unconscious in *samādhī*, and burnt him alive. Gurū Gobīnd Singh went to Dehrādūn and punished some Masaṇds, while others ran away. A year later, Gurbakhsh tried to capture Rām Rāi's *Ḍerā* by force when the followers of Rām Rāi had assembled to celebrate the first death anniversary of their Master. Rām Rāi's youngest wife Puṇjāb Kaur again sought help and protection of Gurū Gobīnd Singh against these armed Masaṇds. Gurū Gobīnd Singh sent Bhāi Naṇḍ Chāṇḍ and Bhāi Manī Singh, who tried to persuade Gurbakhsh to give up his treacherous path, but the notorious Masaṇḍ thought that his 500 Masaṇds could easily drive away the 50 armed men, sent by Gurū Gobīnd Singh. In the scuffle that followed there was an armed clash and 80 Masaṇds were killed, while Gurbakhsh escaped to set up his own Rām Rāiyā mission. Bhāi Manī Singh under instruction from Gurū Gobīnd Singh handed over the administration of the *Ḍerā* to Mātā Puṇjāb Kaur, a very far-sighted and enlightened lady. She asked Gurū Gobīnd Singh to send him a young missionary. Gurū Gobīnd Singh sent a devoted young lad and disciple of Bālū Hasnā, Udāsī Saint. She trained him and disciplined him as successor of Rām Rāi in Udāsī traditions, loyal to Rām Rāi and *Gurū Granth*. The Masaṇḍ Gurbakhsh and his criminal associates took control of other Rām Rāi's centres, and these Rām Rāi's centres continued to work as opponents of Gurū Gobīnd Singh, for which reason, Gurū Gobīnd Singh had to order a social boycott of these Rām Rāiyās. The Udāsī successors of Rām Rāi were treated as Udāsī saints and until recently they were

devoted only to *Gurbānī* traditions. The Delhī Centre of Rām Rāi also came under control of Mātā Puñjāb Kaur and subsequently the Lāhore Centre. After the death of Rām Rāi all novices trained to be successors of Rām Rāi's *gaddī*, were given training in Sikh history and scriptures at Lāhore, and except the present incumbent, Srī Mahañt Índērēshcharan Dās jī, who is from Gaṛhwāl, all were Puñjābīs. Srī Mahañt Índērēshcharan Dās jī is an outstanding educationist and has throughout maintained very amicable relations with the Sikh Community.<sup>10</sup>

### HANDĀLIYĀS, NIRANJANIYĀS ARCH ENEMIES OF THE SIKHS

While all outgroups that emerged from Sikhism showed tendencies of remaining closer to Sikhism and ultimately getting absorbed in the mainstream of Sikhism, the *Niranjanīyās* of eighteenth century and the *Saṁt-Nirāṅkārīs* of the twentieth centuries have shown themselves to be sworn enemies of the Sikhs. They have, at two different periods of history, become tools in the hands of Delhī Rulers, and have been patronized and encouraged in their anti-Sikh moves. Both have been strongly opposed by the Sikhs, and both are moving along the same lines of destiny marked out by Nemesis of their misdeeds and malevolent practices in the name of religion.

Handāl was a Jāt of Janḍiālā, a place near Amritsar, who was living in such great poverty that he could not afford two meals a day. He was disciple of a Muslim Saint, Sulṭān Sakhī Sarwar. He came to know that people get food free in the open kitchen of Gurū Amar Dās. He went there and started serving the Gurū's kitchen with great devotion. The Gurū blessed him and accepted him as his disciple. He came back and set up his missionary centre at Janḍiālā, which for one or two generations preached Sikhism. He recited the Name *Niranjan*, *Niranjan* all day, from which he and his disciples came to be known as *Niranjanīyās*. The word *Niranjan* is the Name of God, preferred by Yogīs and Gurū Nānak.

There are more than one thousand such Names like *Niraṅkāṛ*, *Nirvair*, *Kartāpurkh*, *Abināshī*, *Rām*, *Harī*, *Goviṇḍ*, *Pārbrahm*, *Pūranbrahm*. But he laid stress only on Niraṅjan, from which his followers came to be known as Niraṅjanīyās. They were also known as Handāliyās after Handāl.

In the third generation one of his descendants, Bidhī Chaṇḍ, married a Muslim prostitute. This man and his son Harbhagat became ready tools in the hands of Mughal rulers and were treated by the Sikhs as more dangerous and treacherous than any Mughal or Afghān working against the Sikhs. Harbhagat was responsible for the martyrdom of all great martyrs like Bhāī Tārū Singh, and in league with Lakhpat Rāi, he informed the authorities of the secret hideouts of Sikh women and children. When the Mughals put a price on the heads of the Sikhs, these Niraṅjanīyās minted money. All historical records Persian, Urdu, and Punjābī clearly state that it was Aqīl Dās, the fourth Gurū of the Niraṅjanīyās, who continuously helped Ahmad Shāh Abdālī against the Sikhs, and the Misal leaders faced a life and death struggle against them throughout early eighteenth century. Dr Harī Rām Guptā writes about 1764 invasion of Abdālī: "Emperor Ahmad Shāh then hurried on to Janḍiālā, where his helper Aqīl Dās lived. When the Afghān troops reached Janḍiālā, the Sikhs in a body came to oppose them. A battle was fought here also in which the Afghāns were defeated and Rahīm Khān Bakshī was slain."<sup>11</sup> Dr N.K. Sinhā writes, "In their struggle for independence the Sikhs suffered much molestation because of these people, whose one aim was to ingratiate themselves into the favour of the Durrānīs. They would even point out the Sikh boys and women, hiding in the cornfields, so that the Durrānīs might drag them out. To enumerate only a few important cases, it was on the information of a Niraṅjanī that a very important Sikh, Sukhā Singh, was arrested in 1753; it was a Niraṅjanī, Harmukh Dās, who supplied information leading to the arrest of Tārū Singh in 1764; it was a Niraṅjanī, who had supplied information leading to the persecution of the family of a prominent Sikh, Mehtāb Singh."<sup>12</sup> After the martyrdom of Bhāī

Manī Singh, the Sikhs were so enraged that within a short period they killed the very *Qāzī* and false witnesses who were responsible for these mass murders. Harbhagat was also mercilessly killed. His son Aqīl Dās was responsible for the greater holocaust *Vaḍā Ghalūghārā*. He was also done to death.

These Nirañjanīyās like the present day Sañt Nirañkārīs called themselves Hindus, ate beef and gave freedom to their followers to drink wine and give up all moral scruples and just promote their creed by winning the favours of Delhī rulers or the Mughal *Faujdārs* and *Aīghān* invaders. This is exactly what the so-called Sañt Nirañkārīs are doing these days. These Handāliyās corrupted the Janam Sākhīs and in their own versions of Janamsākhī, they tried to prove that Handāl went to a much higher heaven than Kabīr and Nānak. Nānak could not go even beyond Kabīr, because he had committed some sins. One of the sins attributed to him is that he married low class Muslim girl, Rañgarnī. All historians of the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century have strongly warned the Sikh readers against these Handāliyā and earlier Mīñā versions of Janam Sākhīs. Yet, there is no death of scholars claiming to have written scientific history in our universities, who consider these Janam Sākhīs to be literary and historical masterpieces simply because they have got a chance to print and publish them and write about them. It is a good method of pushing up the sale of hopelessly rotten documents without giving their critical studies, but extremely bad method of serving the cause of history. It is to be admitted that all corrupt versions are partially corrupt, otherwise they could not have been accepted at all. But a critical reassessment of Janam Sākhīs, now that so many other versions are available, is absolutely necessary. Nirañjanīyās as Nirañjanīyās are extinct, but their progeny still exists at Janḍiālā.<sup>13</sup>

RĀDHĀSŌĀMĪ CULT (SIKH GROUPS) BEĀS AND DELHI  
CLAIMING TO BE SPIRITUAL SUCCESSORS OF  
GURŪ GOBIND SINGH

In the early nineteenth century there lived in Hāthras (U.P.), a

Kabīr *Paṁthī* saint, named Tulsī Sāhib (not to be confused with Tulsī, the saint poet and author of *Ramāyaṇ*). He preached *Bhaktī* from *Ādī Gurū Granth* and was popular only in his region. He is the author of *Tulsī Ghaṭ Ramāyaṇ* and some poems published as *Tulsī Sāhib Śabdāvalī*. He owed his wider popularity to one of his disciples Śiv Dayāl Singh, a Hindī-Persian teacher who knew Hindī, Uṛdū, Puñjābī (in *Gurmukhī* script), Arabic and Persian. It was Śiv Dayāl Singh, who is said to be the Founder of Rādhāsoāmī movement. He is alleged to have received a new type of inspiration.

In Vrindābaṇ and at Āgrā, Śiv Dayāl Singh noted that Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cult dominated the religious field of Hindu creeds. In order to give new wine in old bottle with a new label, he posed as an avatār of God and chose to call himself *Soāmī* (a popular form of the Sanskrit word *Swāmī*). But he built his cult on the pattern of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cult by asking his disciples to visualize his beautiful wife Naraṇ Devī as Rādhā and him as the Lord, (*Soāmī*), a modern replica of Kṛṣṇa. He claimed that he came from a much higher realm of God than the one from which Rāma and Kṛṣṇa came. He was addressed as *Soāmī jī Mahārāj*.

His learned disciple who was to become the second gurū, persuaded him to lay the foundation of Rādhāsoāmī cult. His book *Sārbachan* became their Cult Handbook. He died on June 15, 1878. In his book he claims to be *Sat-Puruṣ avatār* of God. He was against idolatry, going to pilgrimages and fasts, but for the rest he stuck to Hindu rites and customs.

His successor, Sāligrām, the second gurū preferred to be addressed as *Hazūr Mahārāj*. By sheer efficiency and hardwork, he rose from the position of a clerk in the Post Office to the highest post of Post Master General. His contemporary Max Muller, the eminent German Indologist says, "The people are convinced that he can work miracles, but he himself regards such things as unbecoming and below his dignity. He was of the opinions that yoga may be good for physical exercises but instead of generating love of God, it gives pride and haughtiness and deprives the Yogīs of spiritual benefits."<sup>14</sup> J.N. Farquhār, another contemporary, says,

"The first gurū may have been the source of the leading ideas of the religious practices of the sect, but one can scarcely doubt that the order and precision which now marks its teachings were the fruit of Sāligrām's vigorous and orderly mind."<sup>15</sup> Thus Sāligrām whom the British government gave the title *Rāi Sāhib*, was the first to give the name Rādhāsoāmī, and a theoretical base to the cult. Quite a large number of funny words have been coined by him for differentiating his cult from other Hindu schools of Uttar Pradesh.

When Sāligrām died, he did not nominate his successor. A clever Brāhmin, Brahm Śaṅkar Mishrā, who was at Benāras at the time of his death, set himself as the third gurū, and in order to control all other aspirants, formed Central Administrative Council. One of these aspirants was Sardār Jaimal Singh, who got involved in the Rādhāsoāmī cult at an early stage. Born at Gurdāspur, he joined military service in 24 Sikh Regiment in 1856, which was stationed at Āgrā. He was then a *Jamādār* in the army, and he became the disciple of the first gurū, Soāmiji Mahārāj Śiv Dayāl Singh. He even remained loyal to the second gurū. The third gurū first kept him out of the Administrative Council but when included later on, he was not given permission to initiate disciples. Bābā Jaimal Singh broke away from the third gurū and built a hermitage on the bank of Beās, not far from the Beās Railway Station. Out of about 1500 Names of God given in the *Ādi Gurū Granth*, he selected five, connected them, irrespective of the fact whether the multi-compound Name of God made any sense or not, and gave it out as his *gurūmantra*, which the Rādhāsoāmī (Sikh group only) still use.

Bābā Jaimal Singh was succeeded by his disciple Bābā Sāwan Singh, an S.D.O. stationed at Naushehrā and hailing from Ludhiānā district. He maintained good relations with the family of Bābā Jaimal Singh. His successor, Saint Charan Singh was well-versed in Gurbānī and based his lectures on Gurbānī, but stressed the need of a human gurū like himself, which is anti-thesis of Sikh philosophy. He was succeeded by Jagat Singh.

Kirpāl Singh, a disciple of Sāwan Singh broke away from

Charan Singh's Beās group on the question of leadership only and established a centre, *Ruhānī Satsaṅg* at Delhī in 1951, thus completely removing the name Rādhāsoāmī from his Mission's name. But he has expressed loyalty to Bābā Sāwan Singh. Like the Nāmdhārīs, Kirpāl Singh has constructed a story of concocted historical facts to prove that Jaimal Singh and Sāwan Singh received the spiritual pontificate from Gurū Gobīnd Singh, though his story is less mythical and less unhistorical in appearance, at least, than the Nāmdhārī fiction.

Kirpāl Singh in his book on Bābā Jaimal Singh says, "Gurū Gobīnd Singh travelled far and wide and went to Poonā in Mahārāshṭrā and brought in his fold many members of the Peshwā family." Without any historical evidence he further alleges, that "Shāma Rāo, the elder brother of Peshwā Bālājī Rāo came into contact with Ratnāgar Rāo, a disciple of Gurū Gobīnd Singh and ultimately Shāma Rāo settled at Hāthras and came to be known as Tulsī Sāhib."<sup>16</sup>

It appears, Kirpāl Singh, like the Nāmdhārī gurūs, who proclaimed themselves the 13th successor of Gurū Nānak, did not care to look into the dates of the heroes of his fiction. Gurū Gobīnd Singh died in 1708 A.D. The same year Sāhūjī, son of Shivājī became king of Mahārāshṭrā and appointed Bālājī Vishwanāth as the first Peshwā in 1713. Bālājī Rāo became Peshwā in 1720. He was eldest son of Bālājī Vishwanāth. Besides these contradictions, Tulsī was not a Mahārāshṭrian. He was a simple Hindu of Uttar Pradesh, who had nothing to do with history of Mahārāshṭrā. Now the Sikh Rādhāsoāmī have split into Beās and Delhī groups. The Āgrā Hindu Rādhāsoāmīs also suffered many splits. The craze for property, wealth and demand for proper accounts led to split into other groups led by Bābū Kāmtī Prashād, Nirmal Chander Banerjee, and others. The demand for accounts led all groups to the court, and the final decision was given by Privy Council. So the more the gurūs the more the splits until wealth and power goes on diluting them and their religious and spiritual pretensions.<sup>17</sup>

NĀMDHĀRĪ LEADERS CLAIMING TO BE SPIRITUAL  
PONTIFFS (GURŪS) AFTER GURŪ GOBĪND SĪNGH

Saṁt Tejā Sīngh M.A. (Harv), who established the first Sikh Temple in London and at Stockton in the U.S.A. was related to the author of this book. During his lifetime he met many close associates of Bābā Rām Sīngh. In his *Jīwan Kathā Saṁt Attar Sīngh*, (*Life of Saṁt Attar Sīngh*) he describes his meeting with Bābā Kesar Sīngh of Bhainī, and then Bābā Kesar Sīngh's account of Bābā Rām Sīngh as follows, "I was baptized as Sikh and yet I did not know what the real gurmantra of the *Khālsā* was? I used to contemplate on the Name "Rāma" which is also found in *Ādi Gurū Granth*. But it was Bābā Rām Sīngh who inspired me with the *Khālsā* gurmantra, the true Name: *Sat-Nām*. (*Vāhi-Gurū*). I soon became an intoxicated mystic and gained much from Bābā Rām Sīngh's *Saṅgat*."<sup>18</sup> Bābā Kesar Sīngh then told Saṁt Tejā Sīngh in the presence of another prominent Nāmdhārī saint, Bābā Kishen Sīngh that Bābā Rām Sīngh always considered himself a *Chowkidār* (Watchman) of the *Khālsā* Pañth, whose duty it as to warn those sleeping in the darkness of ignorance, to beware of thieves robbing the community of its faith, its principles and its culture, and as far as possible lead them towards Light. This indeed is the correct position. Bābā Kehar Sīngh also said to his brother, while parting and bidding him farewell: "During your supervision, the *laṅgar* (open kitchen) will become a powerful institution in Bhainī, but spiritually it will become weaker than what it was during his time. Bābā Kehar Sīngh was there at that time: *Laṅgar dī khed pūrī chale gī, par Nām dī kalā sādē nālon kuch ghaṭ jāe gī*". He also told his brother, "You will die on such and such date and such and such time. After that another Saint will rise in another place, who will gain importance in Puñjāb, and will inspire the Sikhs with the Name of God." Bābā Kehar Sīngh suggested that he was thereby predicting the coming of Saṁt Attar Sīngh, on the basis of a line in *Sau Sākhī: Rām Sīngh pūrā, Attar Sīngh sūrā*.<sup>19</sup>

Thus upto the year 1904, even in Bhainī, his home village and Headquarter of Nāmdhārī durbār, Bābā Rām Sīngh was respected



as a greatest saint of his times and not as gurū. In all the early writings of the Nāmdhārī writers, *Ādi Gurū Granth* is considered the real Satgurū according to Khālsā tradition. Taking the *Khālsā Amrit Pāhul* according to Khālsā tradition is still a must in the Nāmdhārī followers of Bābā Rām Singh.

Two clever Nāmdhārīs, who did not play a significant role in early Nāmdhārī movement, Sañt Nidhān Singh Ālam and Sañt Irīder Singh Chakravatī, constructed a historical myth, which appeared fascinating in the decades of ignorance and confusion about Sikh history, but has now become a funny unhistorical fabricated tale. Even though historical studies are now reaching a stage of indepth critical studies, ignorant Nāmdhārīs still believe this fabulous tale to be true. This mythical tale says:

(i) Gurū Gobiñd Singh did not die at Nander, but secretly disappeared from there and settled in a forest dwelling in Nābhā, taking a new name Ajāpāl Singh.

(ii) Bābā Ajāpāl Singh died at the age of one hundred and forty-six years in 1812 A.D., and before he died, he went to Huzro and appointed Bābā Bālak Singh as the 11th Gurū of the Sikhs. Bābā Bālak Singh before his death, appointed Bābā Rām Singh as the 12th Gurū of the Sikhs. In 1928, Nāmdhārīs asked an artist to prepare a picture of Bābā Bālak Singh, and Gurū Gobiñd Singh bowing before him and offering Gurūship. The picture was published by them, but because of strong protest from the Sikhs it was banned on February 18, 1928 by the British government. The Nāmdhārīs have never published it again.

(iii) After Bābā Rām Singh, his brother was declared successor, and then after him his nephew Bābā Partāp Singh whom the author of this book met incidentally at Nābhā at the residence of Bhāi Sāhib Bhagwant Singh Hariji, the keeper of Bābā Ajāpāl Singh's Derā and son of Bhāi Kāhan Singh, author of *Mahān Kosh*.

The historical distortions stand self-exposed in the face of following inescapable historical reality.

(i) Bābā Ajāpāl Singh never accompanied Gurū Gobiñd Singh to Nander. He was a Sikh and disciple of Gurū Gobiñd Singh, who used to get up very early and repeat the Name *Vāhi-Gurū* in

rhythmic intonation with the beat of the drum in a regular continuous beating sound so profoundly that for miles away the name *Vāhi-Gurū* could be heard. These drums are still lying in Derā Bābā Ajāpāl Singh.

(ii) Bābā Ajāpāl Singh never met Bābā Bālak Singh, nor did Bābā Ajāpāl Singh ever go outside Nābhā.

(iii) Bābā Bālak Singh was the disciple of a Sahajdhārī Saint, Bhagat Jawāhar Mal, whose descendants are still living. He was greatly revered by Nāmdhārīs and by Bābā Rām Singh.

(iv) When Bābā Bālak Singh died, Bābā Rām Singh was at Amritsar. He did not even know about his death. He was on his way to have his last meeting with the Saint, when on the way he met a party of Sikh devotees of Bābā Bālak Singh bringing his ashes. The earlier records and life of Bābā Bālak Singh clearly states that he called himself an *Abhyāsī* (Contemplative) and never a gurū.

(v) For a number of years the Nāmdhārīs did not believe that Bābā Rām Singh was dead, and yet it is strange that they set up his successor gurūs even though they all along believed he was physically living in Russia. It is only now educated Nāmdhārīs have started believing that a deeply religious personality like Bābā Rām Singh, who could survive for 14 years in British prison, could not have survived with his beliefs for even fourteen months in Stalin's Russia. The Russia of early Nāmdhārī movements changed into a completely atheistic country where faith and beliefs are controlled by the State. No doubt, people continue to be religious secretly.

In spite of all these historically untenable constructions, Nāmdhārīs are still closer to Sikhism in other practices. Accepting baptism of the double-edged sword is a must for them. Reading *Gurbāṇī* is another important clause. All their rites are Sikh rites, though performed slightly in a different manner.<sup>20</sup>

ANTI-SIKH SANT NIRANKĀRĪ CULT  
A BREAK-AWAY HEDONIST GROUP  
OF BĀBĀ DAYĀL DĀS'S NIRANKĀRĪ MISSION

History repeats itself. The type of harm, the Niranjanīyās did to

the Sikhs and Sikhism, and the confrontation and clashes that ensued in the eighteenth century, have been repeated in our times by a break away hedonists group of Nirāṅkārīs, calling themselves *Nirāṅkārī Maṇḍal*. Both the Nirāṅjanīyās and the Nirāṅkārīs indulged in lecherous practices in the name of Hinduism. Both encouraged the taking of wine, beef and unlimited sex-indulgence in the name of Hinduism and divine knowledge (*giān*) in which they claimed to be greater than that of all early prophets. Both received the political patronage of the rulers to hurt and embarrass the Sikhs; Nirāṅjanīyās by Zākriyā Khān, Lakhpat Rāi and Ahmad Shāh Abdālī, and the present Saṅt Nirāṅkārī Maṇḍal by Sardār Paṭel and his successors. Although the liberal minded Mrs. Gāndhī and the ultra orthodox Hindu Mr. Morārjī Deśāi differed on all issues, national and cultural, they had profound and perhaps total identity of views on their unremitting support to the Saṅt Nirāṅkārī's confrontations against the Sikhs. Official instructions were, time and again, issued to Indian Ambassadors abroad to give V.I.P. treatment to these false prophets, ready to serve any reactionary cause, which has been denied to the greatest saints, scholars and leaders, not concerned with the ruling party. It has been accepted as a new religion, which serves the type of political purposes which the Nirāṅjanīyās served for the Afghān invaders and the Mughal rulers. I do not doubt that the ultimate gains of our present day secular leaders from such a policy will also be exactly similar to the gains of the Afghān and Mughals. They lost the political, moral and spiritual support of the Sikhs. They lost the Puṅjāb and then they lost India. Here is a brief history of the Nirāṅkārīs:

Booṭā Singh (1873-1943) was a Nirāṅkārī disciple of Bābā Dayāl's Nirāṅkārī Mission and was initiated by the *Granthī* (priest) of Bābā Dayāl's Nirāṅkārī durbār, named Bhāi Kāhan Singh, who continued to remain with the original mission, "He was", says his official biographer, "a tattoo master who regularly visited British cantonments in Naushehrā, Landikotal and Peshāwar every weekend, when soldiers got pay, to tattoo their arms and torsos

with designs of lions, cobras, peacock and women. He had a marvellous singing voice. As wine was strictly prohibited by Bābā Dayāl Dās, the Nirāṅkāri durbār disowned him. He started performing *Kīrtan* in Gurdwārās and even in his official biographies he is addressed as "*Bhāi Sāhib*." He never called himself a "gurū".<sup>21</sup>

Around Bootā Singh gathered a group of like-minded people, who believed in combining religion with the life of pleasures without inhibitions or moral restraints against the use of wine and free sex indulgence. It was just an informal group, but they used the Nirāṅkāri mission slogans and techniques of giving gīan. Bootā Singh called himself a Sikh, and depended on his missionary work only on Sikh history and Gurbāṇī. Bootā Singh drank openly and everyday. Because of his unlimited love for wine and carnal appetites, he always was in need of more money that he could earn by his labours. So he introduced the custom that whenever a disciple met him, he should offer him money, and at times he would take from them more than they could afford.

When he was 70 in 1943, he summoned his associates. As it was to be the last meeting of this hedonistic group of Nirāṅkāris before the leader gave up his ghost, they drank and ate meat till late night. Even while drinking wine, Bootā Singh would chant Gurbāṇī and interpreted it according to his tastes and desires. At 2 p.m., so the story goes, in his official biography, he asked all his disciples to touch his feet by turn and offer him money saying, "*Dhan Nirāṅkār: Glory to the Formless Being.*" As he received the money lustily and rubbed the coins and currency notes against his chest, his aged mother could not help saying, "Even at this moment you have so much craze for money, my son, Why?" When his wife began to weep on seeing him performing money grabbing rites, even while on death-bed, Bootā Singh said, "weep as much as you like as long as I am living, but do not weep when I am dead."<sup>22</sup> He died like a heroic disciple of Bactius (god of wine).

When he was being carried to the cremation ground someone lifted a garland of flowers from his dead body and put around the

neck of Avtār Singh. Since that day Avtār Singh became the leader of the group and he gave important positions to his other companions, some of whom are now known as stars (*Sitārās*). Compared to Bootā Singh, Avtār Singh was almost illiterate knowing only a little Puñjābī. He asked his followers and propagandist to address him as *Śahanshāh*: Emperor.

After 1947, this Nirāṅkāri Emperor migrated and set up his little Empire in Delhī, when the real Nirāṅkāris were just groping for space to build their *āśram*. He appointed seven men to his cabinets called, "Seven Stars." They formed a registered organization named *Saṁt Nirāṅkāri Maṇḍal* in which everyone of his followers (man or woman) to be addressed as Saṁt (Saint). No sooner a drunk, a prostitute, a lecherous politician, lewd government officials received his *maṇṭra*, either from him or any of his stars and starlets, they became Saṁts (Saints).

Lābh Singh, the President of the Seven Stars was the oldest companion of Bootā Singh. He belonged to the original group of Bootā Singh. When a Professor asked him whether it is possible to see God, he replied, "Have you seen your father riding your mother to give you birth?" This is Nirāṅkāri language and methodology of their theology. Des Rāj, a Sikh-hating Āryā Samājīst, joined Bootā Singh and took giān from him and became the Vice-President of the group. Rām Sharan, another person of the founders, became the General Secretary. Amar Singh, who was a staunch Akālī from Paṭiālā became treasurer. He has been able to maintain contacts with his old Party leaders. Nirāṅkāris knew the price of every leader's conscience through him, and it explains why when the Sikh were protesting against anti-Sikh activities of the Nirāṅkāris, these Akālī leaders were crawling on four for the money and votes of these very Nirāṅkāris. Bābū Mahādev, Secretary is quite a popular figure, and so is the Siṁdhī Star, Koṭū Mal, Incharge of Pahārganj Branch, and Sūraj Mohan, a millionaire.

Amongst these seven stars, Gurbachan Singh successor of Avtār Singh was considered the sun, while his wife Kulwant Kaur

was considered the moon. It is not worthwhile here to enumerate the nonsense these false prophets and their apostles of falsehood have been writing. At least Mr. Morārjī considered their writings a part of modern Hindu Scriptures. Avtār Singh in one place says: "God invited him to his Presence and told him that Christ, Nānak, Moḥammad, Buddha, Kṛṣṇa and Rāma have made a mess of my spiritual wisdom. He commanded him to correct them all." People close to Gurbachan Singh say that no one has ever seen him sitting in prayer and meditations, and when questioned about it, he says that it is not necessary for him because he is *Nirañkāṛ* (the Formless God Himself). Another close associate of Gurbachan Singh reports: "He was very fond of eating, especially rich fattening things from his father's bakery, which sold *double roti* (bread) in a predominating Muslim areas. Sometimes he even held eating contests. He is also described as slow moving and procrastinating, but a good mechanic in a motor workmanship."

There came into this organization of stars, a Super-Star, (an ill-fated comet) named Partāp Singh who built a private army for Gurbachan Singh, which was responsible for killing young Sikh protesters in Amritsar on April 13, 1978 and then in Kānpur in September 1978.

Bābū Mahādev, the oldest member of Nirañkāṛī Maṇḍal describes Partāp Singh, Commander-in-Chief of Gurbachan Singh's Private Army, as a one time bandit, a Hindu Āryā Samājīst by birth, who became a Sikh quite early, and then joined the Nihāṅgs, and then the R.S.S., and was planning to blow up the Secretariate in Karāchī before 1947. He was arrested for stealing and other criminal activities which are on record with Bombay Police, and after release from prison, was looking for a new forum where he could express his genius for criminal violence and also enjoy life. Destiny brought him into contact with Gurbachan Singh, who was looking for a musclemans to be his bodyguard and trouble-shooter to highlight the love, luxury and grandeur of Nirañkāṛī Maṇḍal.

While the pious rich and the corrupt government officials,

who knew their invisible and visible influence among the men in power, became his devoted disciples and eased their conscience from past sins to sin more, and to sin lustily, the private army became a threat for many. The two sides of the mission could be seen in practice everyday.

Balwant Gārgī in his biography *Bābā Gurbachan Singh: Saṁt Niraṅkāri* gives an eye-witness account of Financial Commissioner, Hardev Singh Chhīnā and his wife Naresh drinking the footwash of Niraṅkāri Bābā Gurbachan Singh for spiritual enlightenment, immediately after gulping down many glasses of whisky which was freely served and enjoyed. Balwant Gārgī writes, "Naresh had emptied her glass and fixed herself another. She took a short gulp and said dreamily : I am happy. Chhīnā said strongly, 'Bābaji is the tangible form of the Formless.' Naresh served Bābā mutton and chicken on a small table before his *divān* (bed) and he removed his garland.... We looked through the beaded string partition and saw Naresh kneel down and wash Bābā's feet and Chhīnā receiving this water in the crystal bowl. She dried his feet and kissed them, then kissed the towel. Chhīnā stood up with the bowl and brought it before a white-bearded man, sitting next to Bābā. The man held the bowl, brought it carefully to his lips and took a sip. The bowl was carried on around the room. Each drank and then it was set down on a side table. After this drinking of footwash, which the Saṁt Niraṅkāri called *amrit*, everyone drank whisky to his fill."<sup>23</sup> And very solemnly these Niraṅkāris debased and profaned all Hindu and Sikh rites. The only difference is that sincere Sikhs resented it, while hypocritical politicians among the Hindus praised them for at least hurting the Sikhs. The religious minded Hindus were ashamed of the performances of these people, but they could not raise their little finger because their responsible politicians enjoyed everything these Niraṅkāris offered to the politicians. Sycophants and the black sheeps among the Sikhs followed him for many private reasons.<sup>24</sup>

Arch criminals like Partāp Singh found in the Niraṅkāri Maṇḍal, money, pleasure, power and badge of holiness. It was this

man, who had brought violence and weapons into the Nirañkāri Maṇḍal. It was this man who was responsible for the killing of innocent educated religious minded Sikhs, simply because they protested against their teachings in the holy city of Amritsar.

Nemesis overtook this Lucifer of Nirañkāri Bhavan and his bloodthirsty Master Gurbachan Singh, when on the night of April 24, 1980 an unknown assailant shot both of them from his own room and within his own well-guarded fortress, and perhaps from the arsenal always available with his private army. The Ex-Bandit Partāp Singh and the living God of the Nirañkāris were done to death by the unknown assailant, residing within his own protected citadel. Gurbachan Singh used to boast that when his father and young brother died none of the Nirañkāris shed a tear. But when Gurbachan Singh and his bodyguard died, all Nirañkāris wept helplessly like ordinary mortals. None of them behaved like the saints.

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## APPENDIX

### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

#### THE FOUNDERS OF SIKH RELIGION GURŪ NĀNAK (1469-1539)

Gurū Nānak was born on October 20, 1469 A.D. at Talwaṇḍī near Lāhore, now in Pakistan. The date of birth April 15, 1469 given by some historians is not correct. Early in his life, Gurū Nānak disregarded many Hindu rites, customs and Muslim prejudices in the light of his mystical experiences of God's revelation. Well-equipped in Saṅskṛit and Persian literature, he worked as Granary Officer of Daulat Khān Lodhī, Viceroy of Pañjāb at Sultānpur, where he received the *Call*. Feeling profoundly inspired by a prophetic mission, he carried the wisdom of his new faith to distant lands. In his missionary journeys to the East of Puñjāb, his Homeland, he visited Hindu and Muslim religious centres as far as Assām and Sikkim. In the Middle-East, he visited Meccā, Medīnā, and then went to Balkh, the home town of Zarathustra, and from there on to Bukhārā in Central Asia. He spent the last 20 years of his life to build the major Institutions of his faith at Kartārpur, where he passed away on September 7, 1539 A.D. He founded Sikhism on social, cultural and religious foundations, distinct from Hinduism in many ways. His followers started calling him and his successors, True King of kings: *Sachā Pātshāh*. The idea of Kingship and a prophet of vision were synthetically blended in his faith, and fully evolved by his successors. He composed the Sikh Prayers : *Japujī*, *Rehirās*, *Sohilā Ārtī*, *Āsā dī Vār*, besides composing 974 hymns for *Adī Gurū Granth Sāhib*.

## GURŪ AṄGAD (1504-1552)

Before Aṅgad met Gurū Nānak at the age of about 25 years, he was a Durgā worshipper and his name was Lehṇā. He underwent a severe discipline of obedience under the Master, who chiselled him in his own Spirit and trained him in the school of patience and dedicated love. Disregarding claims of his sons, Gurū Nānak selected him as his successor on Hār Vadi 13, 1596 Bk/June 13, 1539. He spent all the 13 years of his pontificate at Khadūr in the Amritsar district, devoting all his time and energy to educating the children of the poor and downtrodden people, and thus breaking the haughty exclusiveness and monopoly of the Brāhamiṇs over divine knowledge. Many months before he died at the age of 48, he selected a successor, 25 years older than himself, named Amar Dās. He composed 63 pithy *Slokas* which are a mine of wisdom. He emphasized in teaching the young in the language, they spoke.

## GURŪ AMAR DĀS (1479-1574)

After a patient and weary search, Amar Dās met Gurū Aṅgad at the age of 62, served him with energy and devotion for 11 years and became the third Gurū of the Sikhs at the age of 73 on March 25, 1552. He trained and organized missionaries who came to be known as *Masaṇds* (those to whom the authority of the Throne is delegated) and placed under them many assistants. Out of 146 of these missionaries, 94 were men and 52 were women, all working on equal status and with sense of equal responsibility.

Gurū Amar Dās introduced such radical reforms that he struck at the roots of some social evils that were doing untold damage to Indian society in general and to the life of Indian women in particular. He encouraged widow marriage, eliminated *Purḍāh* (the veils) and firmly put down the custom of *Satī*: burning the widow alive on the funeral pyres of the husband. Starting composing hymns at the age of 73, he wrote 907 divine Songs

bubbling with youthful fervour. He died at the age of 94 on Bhādon Sudī 15, 1637 Bk/September 1, 1574.

### GURŪ RĀM DĀS (1534-1581)

Srī Rām Dās, the young son-in-law of Gurū Amar Dās, became the fourth Gurū of the Sikhs. Adept in music and poetry, he introduced new *Rāgas* (musical modes) and new poetic expressions such as parallelism and Walt Whitman style free verse, maintaining however the internal rhythm in 679 hymns which he has contributed to *Ādi Gurū Granth*. He founded the city of Amritsar and dug the holy tank and built a shrine in the centre, which his son, Gurū Arjan built as memorable edifice, now known as the Harimandir (Golden Temple). Gurū Rām Dās set up an important missionary centre at Āgrā; the Mughal Capital, under the great poet philosopher, Bhāi Gurdās, and Sikhism spread by rapid strides in North India during this period. He died at the young age of 47.

### GURŪ ARJAN (1563-1606)

"Now appeared on the scene a man who was a born poet, a practical philosopher, a powerful organizer and a great statesman. While yielding to none of his predecessors in piety and spiritual excellence, Arjan, who succeeded as the fifth Gurū, excelled everyone of them in the gifts which are required for building up of a state"<sup>1</sup>. He compiled the *Ādi Granth*, the Holy Book of the Sikhs and added to the sanctity and splendour of Amritsar by building in the midst of the tank, the historical shrine which has become one of the wonders of India and the world. It became the metropolis of the infant common-wealth. Though himself a man of simple habits and great humility, his *durbār* became a place of splendour and magnificence, and the palatial buildings and tents and horses and treasures gave it a look of princely court. "As a matter of fact the Sikhs had made a great advance under the

pontificate of Gurū Arjan. A Sate, peaceful and unobtrusive had been slowly evolved, and with the Gurū at its head: Sachā Pātshāh (True King of kings), the Sikhs had already been accustomed to a form of self-government within the empire. He had many devoted friends among the noted Hindus and Šūfi saints of Lāhore, notably Miṃyān Mir of the *Qādirīah* Order, who was honoured by being asked to lay the foundation of the Harimaṇdir, but his greatness also provoked hostility and bitterness, and he had bitter ideological and political enemies like Chandū Shāh, said to be the Finance Minister in Lāhore government, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindī (a *Naqšbandī* Revivalist) and Akbar's favourite courtier Birbal. Such bitter opponents were waiting for an opportunity to make concentrated attack on the peace-loving Gurū, and they did not miss the opportunity when during the war of succession they persuaded Jahāngīr to believe that he had helped his son. The Emperor rashly ordered death by torture. The Gurū suffered martyrdom on Friday, May 30, 1606 A.D. at Lāhore.

#### GURŪ HARGOBIND (1595-1644 A.D.)

After the martyrdom of Gurū Arjan, Emperor Jahāngīr realized that he had been misguided, and his mind had been poisoned against the Sikh Gurūs by their detractors. His relations with Gurū Hargobind became friendly, but the enemies of the House of Bābā Nānak again created many suspicions, and the Emperor impulsively imprisoned Gurū Hargobind in the Gwālīor fort for some months. He released Gurū Hargobind, but imprisoned Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindī and handed over Chandū, the man blamed by Sikh historians for leading the campaign against the Gurū in the Mughal court, to Hargobind to be punished as he liked. Chandū was paraded through the streets and stoned to death by the people. Thereafter, Jahāngīr's relations with Gurū Hargobind remained peaceful.

When Shāh Jahān came to the throne, the bigoted enemies of

the House of Gurū Nānak once again poisoned the mind of the new Emperor, and there were four battles between the Mughal armies and Gurū Hargobind. Although the Sikhs suffered heavy losses, they defeated the Mughals in all the battles and did not allow them to occupy the cities they were defending. "Thus after Hargobind, the Sikhs were in little danger of relapsing into the limited merit of utility of monks and mendicants."<sup>2</sup> Not only was it made clear to them that worldly pursuits were quite compatible with the deepest religious spirit and highest piety, but they were also convinced that to bear arms in defence of their homes and faith was a paramount duty, and their success had made them realize their own power and the weakness of the Mughal government. This warrior Gurū sat in meditation for five days continuously in a room before he left his body in *samādhi* on March 3, 1644 at the age of 49.

#### GURU HARI RAI (1630-1661)

Called upon to lead the Sikhs and carry the torch of Sikh faith at the tender age of 14, Gurū Hari Rai cautiously avoided conflict with the bigoted Aurangzeb and the quarrelsome and selfish Hindu Chiefs of Sivalik. Befriended and admired by Dara Shukoh, who was for long Viceroy of the Punjab, he consoled and helped the Prince to reach Lahore safely, when hotly pursued by Aurangzeb's armies. Sarmad, the Sufi saint of Jewish origin, was also his friend and admirer. He reorganized the missionary work inside and outside the Punjab, and placed the religious and cultural wings of Sikhism on stable foundations in all the religious centres, organized by his predecessors.

#### GURU HARI KRISHAN (1656-1664)

Gurū Hari Krishan was installed Gurū at the age of five. Gifted and inspired by Divine Power, he baffled the *Pundits* by his knowledge and spiritual powers. He fearlessly disregarded the

occult powers of his elder brother Rām Rāi, who had secured the patronage of Aurangzeb by showing him some miracles. He went to Delhī, when summoned by Aurangzeb, but was entertained by Mirzā Rājā Jai Singh as his guest. The young Gurū, lovingly addressed by the Hindus and Muslims as *Bālā Pīr*, continued to serve the people who were suffering from cholera and small pox; the epidemics spread like wild fire during his stay in Delhī. He avoided meeting the Emperor, and taking the suffering of the people on his own body, he died on Wednesday, Chetra Sudī 14, 1721 Bk/March 30, 1664. A.D. at the age of 7 years, 3 months and 7 days. Mirzā Rājā Jai Singh dedicated his palace to the Child-prophet's memory, and is now known, as Gurdwārā Baṅgla Sāhib, close to Connaught Place in Delhī.

#### GURŪ TEGH BAHĀDUR (1621-1675)

Born on April 1, 1621, Gurū Tegh Bahādur spent the first 21 years of his life under the guidance and discipline of his warrior father, Gurū Hargobīnd, and fought in the battle of Kartārpur at the age of 14. Then he spent 20 years in Elected Silence and intense meditations at Bakālā, near Amritsar, going out for short missionary journeys to some places. The mantle of Gurūship fell on him after the death of his grand-nephew, Gurū Hari Krishan. He went to the east as far as Beṅgāl and Assām to revive the centres of Sikhism, founded by Gurū Nānak, and then to south as far as Purī in Orissā. The terror of Aurangzeb's bigotry drove the lovers of poetry, music and religious freedom away from Delhī after 1670, and many sought refuge in far off places. In 1675 Gurū Tegh Bahādur championed the cause of Brāhmins, who being the repositories of Hindu religion and culture, became the main target of his mass persecution of Hindus. He declared that if Aurangzeb could convert him to Islām by convincing him of his policy and intentions, all Hindus would accept Islām, but from that he should stop persecuting the Brāhmins. And if he failed to convert Gurū Tegh Bahādur, Aurangzeb should convince

himself that people of other faiths would sacrifice everything to stick to their religion. He was martyred under the orders of Aurangzeb on November 11, 1675 A.D. in Chāndnī Chowk at Delhī for the freedom of worship of the Hindus, in whose doctrines he did not personally believe. Through such a sacrifice, Gurū Tegh Bahādur convinced his countrymen that they cannot preserve their freedom, faith and culture without being prepared to sacrifice their life, either in the battlefield or as martyrs and courageous witness of their convictions.

#### GURŪ GOBIṆD SINGH (1666-1708 A.D.)

Gurū Gobiṇd Singh was born at Patnā on December 26, 1666 A.D. He came to Puñjāb with his father in 1671, and he was hardly nine when his father accepted martyrdom as the only answer to the challenge, posed by Aurangzeb's tyranny. Between 1680-1694 the Hindu Chiefs of Śivālik Hill States (16 of the 22 States) led by Bhīm Chaṇd of Kahlūr, and later by his equally hostile son Ajmer Chaṇd, fought over ten battles with Gurū Gobiṇd Singh and lost all of them. Every time the Gurū forgave them, the more treacherous was their subsequent attack. When they helplessly appealed to Aurangzeb, he sent Prince Mu'zzam with a very large army, but the Prince found that the Hindu Chiefs of the Hill States were trouble makers, and they had misinformed his father. He made peace with the Gurū which lasted for about eight years. The Hindu Chiefs then joined hands with the governors of Lāhore and Sirhiṇd and laid a siege to Anaṇdpur. Aurangzeb sent a signed oath to Gurū Gobiṇd Singh, recorded on a copy of the Holy *Kor'ān*, that he wanted peaceful negotiation and he would lift the siege. As soon as the Gurū came out, he was treacherously attacked from all directions. Two of his sons died fighting, and the other two, who were betrayed to the Sirhiṇd Governor, were mercilessly bricked alive and killed. Gurū Gobiṇd Singh fought his way through the battlefield at night and escaped unhurt. Gurū Gobiṇd Singh in his letters to Aurangzeb condemned him for this



treacherous attack, and told him that his oaths were not worth any credibility by anyone. He went south and died at Nander, bestowing Gurūship for all times to come on the Holy book, which is now respectfully called *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib*.

By his sacrifices and creative genius, Gurū Gobīnd Singh made the labours and fruits of the whole Sikh movement secure. He cast the glowing ore of Sikh philosophy and culture into the forms of ethical laws and made it tough as shining bronze. By giving a concrete shape to his grand plan of forming the Sikhs into a supernational commonwealth, "he executed his designs" as Elphinstone observes, "with the systematic spirit of a Grecian Law Giver."

### HOLY MOTHERS

Mātā Suṇdarī was the wife of Gurū Gobīnd Singh and mother of his four sons. Mātā Sāhib Devī is known as the virgin wife (*Kawārā Dolā*) of Gurū Gobīnd Singh, and is recorded as such even in Mughal records. Though a formal marriage was performed with the Gurū, she chose to lead a celibate life of intense meditations and remain the Spiritual Bride of the prophet. Gurū Gobīnd Singh exalted her to the position of the Spiritual Mother of the *Khālsā*. When a Sikh is baptized, a Sikh is told that Mātā Sāhib Devī is his spiritual Mother. She was also given the authority to use Gurū Gobīnd Singh's special cross-like seal symbol on her *Hukamnāmās* which we find in all letters of Gurū Gobīnd Singh. We do not find this cross-like symbol (+) in any letter of Mātā Suṇdarī, but we find it on all *Hukamnāmās* of Mātā Sāhib Devī. Both the Holy Mothers spent their last days at Delhī, except few years at Mathurā, when the condition in Delhī became quite unsafe. Mātā Suṇdarī always treated Mātā Sāhib Devī as her spiritual superior, while Mātā Sāhib Devī treated Mātā Suṇdarī as the mistress of the household. Both the Holy Mothers lived for over two decades. Mātā Sāhib Devī died a year after the death of Mātā Suṇdarī. The exact dates of their death are not known so

far. Both the Holy Mothers were cremated at Bālā Sāhib, the place where Gurū Hari Krishan was cremated, and their *samādhīs* are found in the Bālā Sāhib shrine side by side with each other, near the door steps of the shrine.

#### THE FOUR SONS OF GURŪ GOBĪND SĪNGH *CHĀR SĀHIBZĀDĀS*

*Ajīt Singh*, eldest son was born at Pāontā Sāhib on January 26, 1687. He fought a number of important battles between the age of 13 and 18. He rescued a Brāhmin girl from the clutches of Paṭhān of Bassī, near Hoshiārpur, by making a surprise attack on his fort. He died fighting in the battle of Chamkaur on December 7, 1705 at the age of 18, when only 40 Sikhs including his second brother, and along with his father were pitched in a day long battle against countless hordes of Mughal armies.

*Jujhār Singh*, second son of Gurū Gobīnd Sīng was born in 1690 and died fighting in the battle of Chamkaur on December 7, 1705, at the age of 16.

*Zorāwar Singh*, the third son of Gurū Gobīnd Sīng was born on November 18, 1696. He was tortured and bricked alive by the *Nawāb* of Sirhind when he was hardly 9 year old on December 12, 1705 A.D.

*Fateh Singh*, the fourth son of Gurū Gobīnd Sīng was born on February 26, 1699, and was bricked alive along with Zorāwar Sīng on December 12, 1705 A.D. at the age of 6.

#### THE FIVE BELOVED ONES: *PAÑJ PIĀRĀS*

The first Five, who were initiated into the Khālsā Holy Order on March 29, 1699 A.D. with *Khande di Pāhul* by Gurū Gobīnd Sīng were:

*Bhāi Dayā Singh*, son of Bhāi Suddhā and Māi Diālī, a Ksatriya family from Lāhore.

*Bhāi Dharam Singh*, son of Sañt Rām and Māi Sābho of Hastināpur

(U.P.), agriculturist by profession.

*Bhāi Himmat Singh*, son of Joytī Rām and Māi Rāmo, washerman of Purī in Orissā.

*Bhāi Mohkam Singh*, son of Tīrath Rām and Mātā Sukhdevī from Dwārkā in Kāthiāwār, a tailor by profession.

*Bhāi Sāhib Singh*, son of Chaman Rām (Tulsī Nāī) and Biśandevī from Bidar in central India, a barber by profession.

#### EMINENT APOSTLES

*Bhāi Buddhā*, a disciple of Gurū Nānak, lived with the Founder of Sikhism for the last 20 years of his life and was Master of Ceremonies for all the five successors of Gurū Nānak. He died during the lifetime of the Sixth Gurū at the age of 135.

*Bhāi Gurdās*: Nephew of the third Gurū, was born in 1552. Along with Gurū Arjan, he compiled the first authentic copy of *Ādi Granth*. His 40 *Vārs*, each containing 20-30 verses gives metaphysical and social philosophy of the Sikhs. His 675 *Kabitt Sawāiye*, written in chaste Sanskritized *Braj Bhāṣā*, give his mystical experience. Gurū Arjan called his work, 'Key to the *Ādi Granth*', and canonized scriptures, which stand, along with the works of Bhāi Nānd Lāl, next in importance to *Ādi Gurū Granth*. Next to the Gurūs, he and Bhāi Buddhā were the most revered personalities. The Gurūs treated them as their equals, and even revered them as their Elders, but they like true Sikhs, remained the humblest disciples. He died in the year 1632 A.D.

*Bhāi Gurdās II*: He was a contemporary of Gurū Gobīnd Singh and lived upto the time of Bābā Baṇḍā Singh Bahādur. His composition reflects the period of the glorious conquests of Baṇḍā Singh.

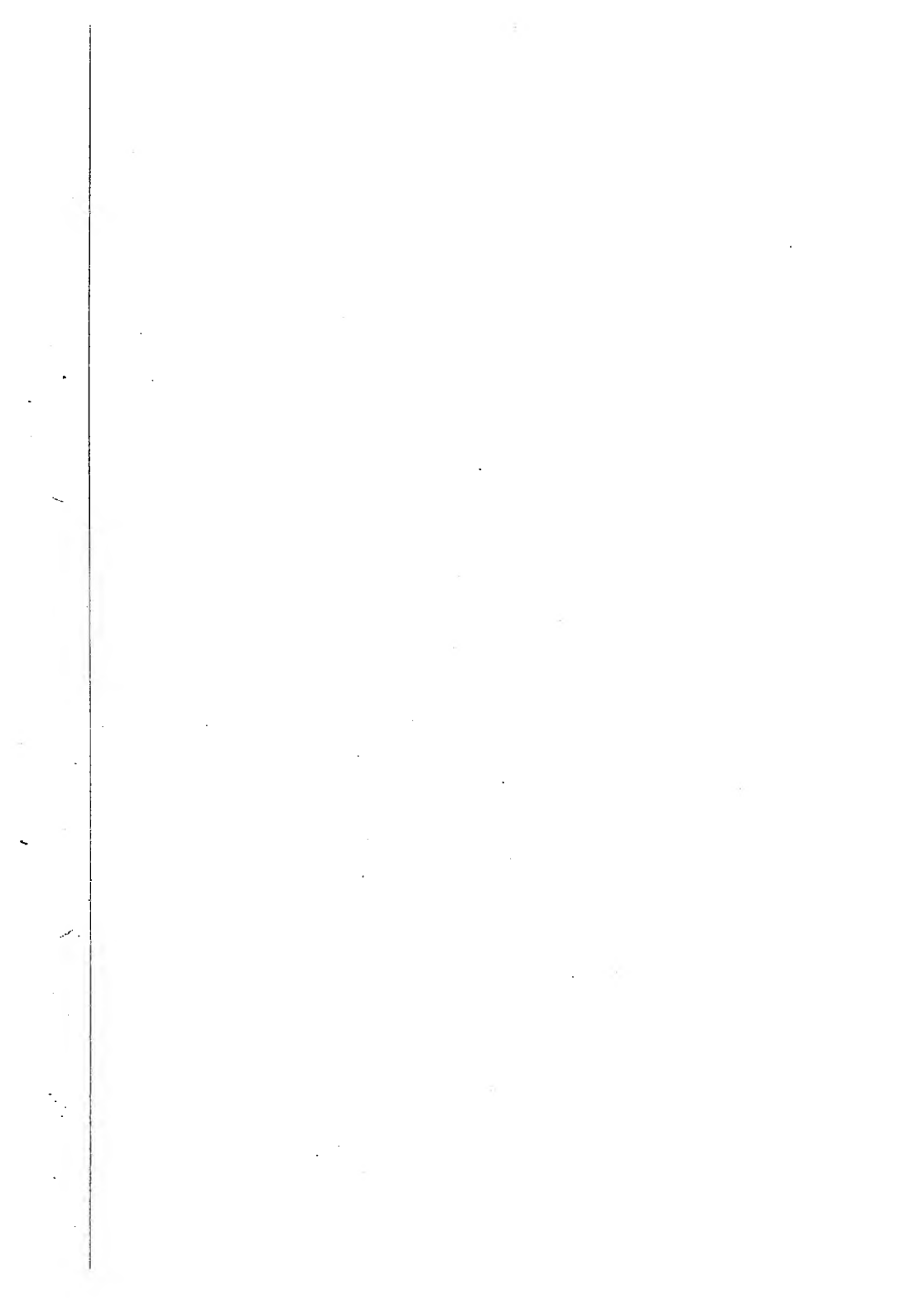
*Bhāi Nānd Lāl*: During his early period he was *Mīr Munshī* of Crown Prince Mu'azzam, and then *Nāib Subedār* of Multān. He

gave up the services of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb and became disciple and Poet Laureate of Gurū Gobīnd Singh. A great Persian scholar, who has left about 9 Persian works and one in Hindī, giving the most elevating exposition of Sikhism in Ṣufi terminology. He played the role of a peace maker and diplomat between Gurū Gobīnd Singh and Prince Mu'azzam, later Bahādur Shāh.

*Bhāi Manī Singh*, was son of Bhāi Māi Dās and grandson of Bhāi Bālū, who fell a martyr in the first battle of Gurū Hargobīnd against the Imperial forces at Amritsar. He was born on March 10, 1644 and came to Gurū Hari Rāi for religious education and training at the age of 13. The whole family including his elder brother Bhāi Jethā and Bhāi Dayāl Dās were already in the Gurū's service. Bhāi Dayāl Dās served Gurū Tegh Bahādur as the Household Minister and was done to death by being thrown into a boiling cauldron on the day Gurū Tegh Bahādur suffered martyrdom in Chāndnī Chowk at Delhī on November 11, 1675. Bhāi Manī Singh served Gurū Gobīnd Singh all his life and participated in all his battles upto 1700 A.D. in which year he was sent to Amritsar with a copy of *Ādi Gurū Granth*, a flag, a drum to wrest control of Harimaṇdir and Akāl Takhat from the Miṇās. Bhāi Manī Singh served as the High Priest of Harimaṇdir, a great scholar of theology and history, and taught and trained all the great men who emerged as the Misal Sardārs and Saints of the eighteenth century. Bhāi Manī Singh suffered martyrdom at the age of 90 on June 24, 1734 along with his brother Jagat Singh, and sons Chattar Singh and Gurbakhash Singh for Sikhism. All his eight brothers and seven of his ten sons also suffered martyrdom.

#### REFERENCE AND NOTES

1. Gokal Chaṇd Nāraṅg, *Transformation of Sikhism*.
2. J.D. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, p.45.



## GLOSSARY

*Āchār* : conduct, manner of action, behaviour, good conduct, custom, practice, usage, tradition, or immemorial usage as the foundation of law.

*Adab (Ādāb)* : civilities, good manner, ceremonies, politeness, form of address, Rules of Śūfī Orders.

*Ādi*: Primal, first, beginning, origin.

*Ādi Gurū Granth*: Holy Book of the Sikhs which is venerated in the Sikh temples as a Living Embodiment of the Ten Gurūs. It was compiled by Gurū Arjan Dev after ten years concentrated labour on it with the help of Bhāī Gurdās. It was finally completed after inclusion of the hymns of Gurū Tegh Bahādur and one of his own *sloka* by Gurū Gobīnd Singh, and crowned as the Eternal Gurū, as his continuing successor in 1708 A.D. Since then, it is venerated as *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib*: The Perennial Living Enlightener. To the devout Sikhs it is Mystic Person of the Ten Gurūs in the form of the inspired Wisdom of the Gurūs and great Medieval Saints.

*Agyān* : ignorance, spiritual blindness.

*Akāl* : (i) Timeless, immortal, beyond death, Eternal.

(ii) In Sanskrit literature it is used mostly in the sense;  
importune, done at an improper time.

*Ākālī* : Eighteenth century saintly Sikh warriors, who were dedicated only to the cause of the freedom and *dharma*. It was applied to those *Nihāṅg* regiments of warriors who did not have any testimonial ambitions or political aspiration beyond fighting for the freedom and integrity of the Sikh people.

After 1925 this term began to be applied to the members of a

Sikh political party Akālī Dāl, which was formed in 1919 for the liberation of Gurdwārās from corrupt *Mahants*. The leaders of the first phase of Akālī Dāl were men of high character, self-sacrificing and a source of inspiration for the non-violent political movement to all other political parties. But after the partition in 1947, Akālī Dāl split into two groups, one claiming to be fighting the Congress rulers in Delhī, and the other as *Pañthic* leaders who were actually collaborators and played treacherous role. Now the Akālī Dāls are split into 12 different Akālī Dāls, each named after its leader's family name or name of popular dead leader. Some of these Akālī Dāls are naked tools of the Delhī rulers, a few are surrogate groups, pretending to be saviours of Sikhs, but hoping that the Central Government will somehow install them as power-brokers. Some few are fighting for the cause in the wrong way without going to the masses, whose untold sufferings are large in their hearts.

*Akāl Ustatī* : One of the most important compositions of Gurū Gobīnd Singh, found in the *Dasam Granth*: Compendium of different types of works of Gurū Gobīnd Singh. It gives Gurū Gobīnd Singh's concept and philosophy in all its transcendent and immanent forms. The composition abruptly ends with verse 272; the last verse is incomplete. This indicates that the compilers were not able to get the complete version of *Akāl Ustatī*. It was a much longer version.

*Akāl Takhat*: lit. the Pañthic Throne of Eternal Lord. From Gurū Nānak to the early life of Gurū Arjan, the Mughal emperors (Bābar, Hamāyūn, Akbar) though initially suspicious, became friendly and respectful to the Gurūs. These emperors did not listen to the complaints, sent against the Sikh Gurūs by Brāhmins and *Mullās*. In spite of this friendly attitude of the emperors, we find a very strong protest against ruthless kings, corrupt ministers, greedy judges and religious exploiters like Brāhmins, Mullās in the writing of Sikh Gurūs. But when Jahāngir ascended the throne, he was determined to eliminate many friends of Akbar and his liberal rule to win over fanatic Mullās and courtiers. The enemies of the

Gurūs made a false case against Gurū Arjan, and he was tortured to death. Foreseeing the things to come, Gurū Arjan employed eminent Sikhs who had worked as trained soldiers in Mughal or Rājput armies, and disciplined his son to be saviour with the Sword, who was to defend the Faith and helpless people. In 1606 A.D. Gurū Hargobind had a full-fledged army. When he was anointed Gurū, he had put on two swords: one symbol of the Gurū as Defender of Faith; the Sword of *Piri*, and the other as Defender of Political freedom and integrity of the Sikhs; the Sword of the *Miri*.

If anyone sat on a raised platform 2 or 3 feet high and kept an army and a war drum, he was considered a rebel, who challenged the political authority of the Emperor. In 1609 A.D. Gurū Hargobind built a throne (*Takhat*), resembling the throne of Mughal emperors, but higher than it, kept a war drum right in front of the Harimaṇdir (Golden Temple). While the temple was meant for prayers, worship, *Kirtan* from dawn till late night, Akāl *Takhat* was the place where National gatherings of the Sikh Gurūs took place, and where after formal prayers, the Gurūs gave audience. Three more *Takhats* were built subsequently: *Takhat* Kesgarh at Anandpur Sāhib at the foot of Śivālik hills, *Takhat* Patnā Sāhib at the birth-place of Gurū Gobind Singh and *Takhat* Hazūr Sāhib at Nander in Mahārāshṭrā. These *Takhats* became the rallying places for the Sikhs in the north, east, south, while Akāl *Takhat* and Golden Temple became place where representatives of the whole Sikh Pañth assembled and took National decisions. While all the four *Takhats* were equal in sanctity and importance, Akāl *Takhat* has always been the place of central authority, and Harimaṇdir (Golden Temple) is supreme amongst all the holy shrines of the Sikhs. The Sikhs assembled here on Baisākhī and Diwālī days; the two days when the disciples from far and near come to offer the homage to the Gurūs. Whenever in history the Harimaṇdir and Akāl *Takhat* have come under siege of Mughals, Afghāns and the British, there has been an unprecedented militant reaction to liberate it from the clutches



of the rulers, resulting in untold sacrifices but ultimate victory.

*Allāh*: Literal meaning in Arabic, 'worshipped'. The word Lord God is rendered *al-rabbu'l-illāh*. Allāh is shortened form of *Ilāhū*. Prophet Moḥammed found the Meccans believing in a Supreme God, whom they called Allāh; however they associated other minor deities with it, called the daughters of Allāh. The first article of the Muslim creed therefore is: *Lā illāha illā' llāhu*. There exists no God except the One, whom you call Allāh. This uncompromising monotheism is also the corner stone of Sikh philosophy. The first Chapter of *Kor'ān* has given two words to Puñjābī language Allāh and *Rabb*.

*Amrit* (Sk. *amṛta*): (i) Elixir of life, nectar, ambrosial drink or any drink which is considered physically and spiritually elevating.

(ii) The Name of God, or the Word of God is considered ambrosial in nature because it is inspired with illumination and ecstasy.

(iii) Baptismal Water, administered in the Sikh initiation ceremony known as *Khaṇḍe di Pāhul*.

(iv) milk, (v) gold.

*Anand* : spiritual delight, bliss.

*Anandū Sāhib* : Name of composition of Gurū Amar Dās, which forms one of the daily prayers of the Sikhs. The actual title is *Anandū*. The word *Sāhib* is a Persian title of courtesy, applied to holy persons and objects. It means 'friend' or something dear and venerable.

*Anhad Nād*: Unstruck Music. *Nād* is loud sound. *Anhad* not caused by musical instruments, Celestial Music heard in the higher state of spiritual consciousness.

*Anant* : (i) infinite, endless, boundless, Attribute of God.

(ii) Sheshnāg, the Serpent god.

*Āsā di Vār*: Composition of Gurū Nānak.

*As, Asi*: Sword, Attributive Name of God, used by Gurū Gobind Singh in his writing. Words like *Asdhuj*: The Sword as the Banner of God or *Asiketu*, meaning the same thing, are also used by Gurū Gobind Singh in his writings.

*Ardāsa*: Per: *Arzdāsht*, a humble supplication. Name of congregational

prayer, original pertain composed by Gurū Gobind Singh, followed by remembrance of Five Beloved Ones, the four sons of the tenth Master, saints, martyrs, hermits, sages of all religions, and closing with actual individual or congregational supplication.

*Āratī*: (i) A form of worship in which lamps placed in a salver are waved before a deity. (ii) Name of a composition of Gurū Nānak which is the Bed-time prayer of the Sikhs.

*Arhant*: The word is derived from the root *arh*: to deserve, to be worthy, to be fit, and is used to denote a person who has achieved the goal of religious life (in *Theravāda* Buddhism). The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* uses this term for the ruler (King). But mostly the term was used to describe religious divines other than orthodox Brāhmins. One of the epithets of Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism, was *arhat*.

*Ashṭapadī*: A variety of meter used by Poet Jaidev in *Gīta Govinda*, and by the Sikh Gurūs throughout the scriptures. Gurū Arjan's *Ashṭapadīs* in his composition *Sukhmanī* are on the same pattern as *Gīta Govinda*.

*Ātmā*: the self, the Spirit, the inner being, the soul.

*Avatār*: manifestation of a deity into human or less than human form, which is not God. In Sikh Scriptures even the descent of human soul into lower spirit as rebirth in animal souls is called *avatār*. The *avatārs* of Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Śiva are mentioned, but it is considered a sin to call these deities God. An *Aṁsh Avatār* is the partial manifestation of a Deity or a cosmic Divine Power created by God. *Avatārs* are creatures of God and never God; the Supreme Being. In *Ādi Gurū Granth*, it is generally used in an etymological sense.

*Bābā*: (Per): Father, Grandfather, Head of a Religious Order; one who is renowned for virtues and uprightness. Turkish Missionary Preacher, Sheikh. In Mughal courts the princes were addressed as Bābā. Before they became kings Jahāngir and Shāh Jahān were addressed as Bābā Jahāngir and Bābā Shāh Jahān. This custom was adopted in the *durbār* of the Sikh Gurūs. The Gurū was

addressed as *Sachā Pātshāh*, the True King, and his sons were addressed as *Bābā* (Prince). We have *Bābā Srī Chanīd*, *Bābā Gurdittā*, *Bābā Ajit Singh*, *Bābā Fateh Singh*.

*Bachitar Nāṭak*: A voluminous work of Gurū Gobīnd Singh, forming the major part of his collected works, the *Dasam Granth*. It consists of four parts. The first part is the autobiography of Gurū Gobīnd Singh called *Apnī Kathā*. Sometime only this composition is known as *Bachitar Nāṭak*. But other parts of *Bachitar Nāṭak* includes the classical heroes of India: Rāma, Kṛṣṇa and other ten heroes as Avatars of Viṣṇu. Poet scholars from Vālmikī to Kalīdās and Vyāsa are known as Avatārs of Brahmā. Yogīs and *Sanyāsīs* like Gorakhnāth, Dattātreya and Pārasnāth are avatārs of Śiva. *Chanḍī Charitar* is also a part of *Bachitar Nāṭak*.

*Bhagautī*: lit. Sword; symbol of Divine Power, Almighty God, A Attributive Name of God in writings of Gurū Gobīnd Singh.

*Bairāgī*: *Vairāgī*: The word *Vairāgī* means apathy towards worldly interests, stoicism, awakening of the spiritual consciousness in one's mind. When Rāmānand's followers broke away from orthodox Vaiṣṇavism, they formed a *Vairāgī* sect open to all lower castes.

*Baisākhī*: Indian New Year Day. During the Gurū period it fell in the last week of March. These days it falls in the second week of April. Gurū Amar Dās fixed it as National Assembly Day, when Sikhs from distant places assembled at the feet of the Gurū. Those who were not able to come on *Baisākhī* day, came to the Gurū on *Dīwālī* day in October. It was during one such annual gathering of the *Baisākhī* (New Year Day) in 1699, Gurū Gobīnd Singh ordained the *Khālsā* Holy Order.

*Bānī*: lit. speech, word, language, sound, voice, utterance, a literary work or composition; hymns; divinely inspired poetical composition. There are two major divisions made by Gurū Amar Dās: *Sachī Bānī*, Hymns inspired by truth and revelation of higher mystical experiences; *Kachī Bānī*: poetical expressions based on imitations by false and hypocritical prophets; it may be inspired by devotion to petty gods and goddesses, or it may be utterance

of false prophetic and hypocritical cult saints. All the hymns in *Ādi Gurū Granth* and canonized Scriptures are considered *Bāṇī*. The works of Bhāi Gurdās and Bhāi Nand Lāl have the status of *Pramāṇik Bāṇī*: authentic canonized Scriptures. The hymns of the Gurūs are classified as *Mahallā* (Mansion) I, II, III, IV, V, IX and X. All Gurūs being one in Spirit used the signature name of Nānak. The hymns of medieval saints coming from Hindu tradition are called *Bhagat Bāṇī*. The hymns of Śūfis are called *Sheikh (Pīr) Bāṇī*. The hymns of the Minstrels are called *Doom Bāṇī*. All are collectively called *Gurbāṇī*, because they are part of Holy *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib*, which is revered as the living embodiment of the Ten Gurūs and their Words of God.

*Bhagta (Bhagat)*: One who believes in Love, is the sole guarding spirit of higher spiritual life. In Hinduism there are Devī Bhaktas, Kṛṣṇa Bhaktas, Rām Bhaktas. Śiva Bhaktas and Vaiṣṇav Bhaktas. Each system has its own rules, ceremonies and devotional patterns. In Sikhism true *Bhaktī* is the intense love of God alone, and the Sikh Gurūs accepted and always treated Śūfis and low caste Hindu Bhaktas as a part of the Universal Brotherhood of Sikhism.

*Bhāi*: Revered Brother and saints. Śūfis in Sikh history were addressed as Bhāi. The word saint was never used for saints till the middle of nineteenth century, when the saint cult emerged like mushrooms and died a natural death after a good deal of cheap propaganda.

*Bibek*: *Vivek* (1) discrimination, discernment, discretion, consideration, discussion, investigation, distinction, (2) The power of distinguishing between right or wrong, between true or false, between the visible and invisible and between illusion and reality. *Rehit-bibek*, the power of distinguishing between right and wrong conduct, between truth and falsehood in moral and spiritual living.

*Bismillā* (Arabic): In the Name of God; Because it is pronounced at the time of killing an animal. It means sacrificed, slaughtered, meek, forbearing.

*Brahm/Brahmān*: (i) Supreme Reality, God, (ii) Brahṁā is the first member of the Hindu Trinity.

*Brāhmin:* the first of the four Hindu Castes, well-versed in sacred texts, the class of men who are the repositories and communication of sacred knowledge.

*Brahm Giānī:* One who has perfect knowledge and illumination of God, and such an illumined personality that he lives in continuous communion with God. He always lives in the highest spiritual state and has all the qualities of a perfect saint and apostle. One *Aṣṭpadī* (Octavo) has been devoted to the qualities of a Brahm Giānī by Gurū Arjan in his composition of 24 *Aṣṭpadīs*, *Sukhmanī* in *Rāga Gaurī*.

*Brahmchārī:* the state of an unmarried religious student; the state of continence and chastity.

*Bhāī Buḍḍhā:* Buḍḍhā (Bhāī) born in a poor Jāt family of Kathūnaṅgal in 1506 A.D. Father's name Sughā Randhāwā, mother's name Gaurāñ. Came into contact with Gurū Nānak at the age of 10. He married a peasant girl named Morvān. He passed away in the village in 1631 A.D. during the life-time of the sixth Master, Gurū Hargobiñd. Bhāī Buḍḍhā is the first of the most sacred Patriarch of Sikh history, who was appointed the Master of Ceremonies. The first five successors of Gurū Nānak were anointed by Bābā Buḍḍhā. Gurū Nānak established a unique precedent by appointing an enlightened Sikh Saint from a Śūdra Jāt family as Master of Ceremonies, which throughout India was performed mostly by Brāhmins, or at the most by Kāṣṭriyās. After the death of Bābā Buḍḍhā his descendant sons, grandsons became the Masters of Ceremonies. As a Patriarch of first order, he was so much respected by Gurū Nānak's successors that they bowed before him, touched his feet in reverence and would never say "no" to any suggestion coming from him.

*Buddhī:* intellect; faculty which reasons and understands.

*Charan:* feet.

*Charan-kamal:* lotus feet; symbolically meaning the first spiritual experience when the Light of God dawns within the heart. The Lord is said to have stepped in the courtyard of the seeker's heart.

Full illumination of God is symbolically called, "seeing the Face of God," and that is what Moses was not able to do so.

*Charan Pāhul*: Baptism of the Lotus Feet i.e. the initiation ceremony of the Sikhs, instituted by its founder, Gurū Nānak, which was replaced by initiation with the double-edged sword by Gurū Gobind Singh in 1699. The new baptism was to create the *Khālsā* Holy order. See *Khālsā* Holy order.

*Charḍiān kalān*: a state of mind which is cheerful in sorrow and suffering and stoically optimistic even in the face of hopelessly critical situation. Having steadfast confidence in the Ultimate Justice and Grace of God. Never surrender to despair, nor to terror of oppression. *Kalā* is one sixteenth of the moon, and the full moon is sixteen parts put together. When the moon rises, it emerges with light of sixteenth part and emerges in full splendour. This is symbolic of a perpetual hope and confidence that from under all clouds the moon is dimly visible and will rise with full splendour.

*Chelā*: disciple.

*Dān*: (i) giving, granting, teaching, (ii) a gift, donation, present, (iii) liberality, charity, giving away as charity, munificence, (iv) In ancient Sanskrit literature it is also used in the sense of bribery as one of the four expedients (*upāyās*) of overcoming one's enemy.

*Darśan*: (i) vision, glimpse of divine Lights, (ii) philosophy, school of thought.

*Dasam Granth*: Gurū Gobind Singh was a Poet-historian and philosopher of wide vision. He wrote different types of works, (i) Philosophic works like *Jāpūi*, *Akāl Ustāfi*, *Gyān Prabodh* etc. (ii) Historical works, which include his own Autobiography and all great figures of ancient history, which are referred in *Ādi Gurū Granth*. (iii) A Dictionary of the names of weapons. (iv) *Triyā Charitar*, which depicts the social, cultural and historical role of women at their best and worst, through stories resembling the stories of Bocucaus, Decameorn and Arabian Nights. Many stories have historical background. These separate works were first compiled by eminent contemporary Apostles Bhāi Mani Singh and Bābā

Binod Singh. There are pages of original manuscript. There is a third copy, prepared by Bābā Dīp Singh. There are a few other quite authentic copies prepared from these original codices. Short-sighted writers and scholars, who have neither cared to study the whole *Dasam Granth*, nor have the equipment and ability to understand and interpret even such well-known philosophic compositions as *Akāl Ustāfi* and *Gyān Prabodh*, have displayed their intellectual and literary short-sightedness by projecting their rejection slips without understanding any composition.

*Dastār*: turban.

*Dayā*: mercy, compassion, pity.

*Degh*: cauldron.

*Dervish, Fakīr*: mendicant, holyman, Šūfī Saint. Šūfism centres around "poverty" and mystical path. Poverty is called *faqr* and from it are formed the words *faqīr*, (poor) and *dervish* (poor mendicant). Outward poverty was considered essential for inward spiritual richness. He who has no wish for himself in this world and the next, is considered a true Faqīr in Šūfism and Sikhism. Gurū Nānak insists that a dervish is one who knows patience (*sabr*), contentment (*raṣā*), and lives in devotion and prayer.

*Dharma*: The word is used by the Sikh Gurūs and Bhaktas in *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib* in various senses, such as social and cultural duties, religion, faith, scriptural laws, higher moral and spiritual laws, ethical conduct and the righteousness in personal and social life, Ultimate Justice, Truth and Righteousness, doctrines and spiritual practices which led to enlightenment.

*Dharam Rāj*: Also called *Yama*, *Azrāil*, King of Divine Justice after death, who judges the account of the actions of the *jīvas* and who consults Chitra and Gupta, the two account-keepers of good and bad deeds. Dharam Rāj works under the orders of the Lord. He decides according to the Code of True Dharma. He has authority over all the evil souls, but he receives good souls with great reverence, which are absorbed in the remembrance of the God. He is a divine power created by God, but not God.

*Dhīān*: (*Dhyāna*) concentration of mind, meditation of Deity.

*Dīkḥṣā*: initiation, imparting the *mantram* or secret doctrine.

*Durbār*: (i) Royal court, (ii) Presence of God or the Court of God.

*Durgāh*: (i) the Court of God's Justice, (ii) Gate, (iii) door of the King's Palace, a courtyard before a palace, (iv) shrines of eminent Ṣūfī saints.

*Gīān* (*Gyān*): Knowledge. The Sikh Scriptures discuss all type of knowledge; intellectual or mere bookish knowledge which a man acquires for prestige, but does not practice what he preaches through his books; worldly or professional knowledge which a man acquires for earning his living; knowledge of human nature, the world and universe which is helpful in understanding life and human nature and society; real knowledge comes from intellectual perception of divine within us and the Presence of His Light within the Universe. The first stage of this path to knowledge of Reality begins with knowledge of inner Self: *Āpā-Chīnā*. By contemplating on divine Attributes, one knows His Attributes and reaches His Presence. Human soul can attain perfection through experimental knowledge of God: *Braham Gyān*. The knowledge of Ultimate Truth is revealed to the learned who contemplate Him and practice what they preach, or the saints of God through gracious illumination.

*Golden Temple (Harimandir)*: The third Gurū of the Sikh, Gurū Amar Dās, asked his son-in-law (would-be-successor), named Jeth Chānd to build a Holy Shrine and around it a holy city. He bought land, which was connected with village Sultānwīnḍ, Tuṅg, Gumtālā and Gilwālī. The place was visited by Gurū Nānak, accompanied by Gurū Aṅgad Dev. The whole site after the construction of new city was known as Chak Rām Dās. Initially the tank of *Santokhsar* was dug. Amritsar city was founded, the residential building known as *Gurū kā Mahal* was built. Workmen of all trades were invited. The digging of the Sacred Pool and the site for Harimandir was started in 1573 A.D. and was completed in 1577 A.D. In the present site of Golden Temple, a small temple was constructed in which prayers and services begin. Bhāī Gurdās says, "Gurū Rām Dās dug an



ambrosial pool, and in the center lighted a Lamp of Perennial Divine Light: *Pūran tāl khaṭāyā Amritsar vich jot jagāi.*” It was Gurū Arjan who invited Miyān Mīr to lay the foundation stone of Harimaṇdir, and built the temple and tank of baked bricks and enduring material, the originality of which has been maintained. By the time Temple construction was complete, the *Ādī Granth* was compiled and its original copy was placed in the sanctum sanctorum in August 1604 A.D. or perhaps earlier. The date of installation is celebrated every year.

Lakhpat Rāi, the Hindu *Diwān* of Zakriyā Khan gave an impression to the Lāhore Viceroy that it is the Amritsar shrine and the Sacred Pool which was the source of strength of this unique inspiration of the Sikhs. He laid seize to it, resembling the present seize by Delhī rulers, and the Sikhs had to fight for its possession. Under the same impression that it is source of strength and unity, Ahmad Shāh Abdālī destroyed it and damaged the Temple and Akāl Takhat thrice, but in none of the invasions was the foundation of the Temple and Akāl Takhat ever destroyed. The Sikhs rebuilt it every time till they captured political power and ruled over Puñjāb.

Once more, after 1984 Blue Star military attack of Mrs. Indirā Gāndhī's rule, the Golden Temple Complex and most of the historical Sikh Temples were controlled by surrogate leaders.

*Guṇas*: attributes, consistent elements, the three modes of psychic states.

*Gurbāṇī*: see *Bāṇī*, *Vāṇī*, lit. Bāṇī, utterance of the Gurū.

*Gurbilās*: lit. Divine Sport of the Gurū; the *Janam Sākhīs* in prose were the hagiographic narratives of Gurū Nānak's life. In the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the *Gurbilāses* (Lives of sixth and eighth Gurūs) were written on the pattern of Gurū Gobind-Singh's *Bachittar Nāṭak*. This tradition along with *Sākhī Pothī* tradition continued to record Sikh history in eighteenth and nineteenth century.

*Gurdās*, *Bhāi*: was son of Ishar Dās, younger brother of Gurū Amar Dās. He is author of 40 *Vārs*, each having 20-49 verses. Each verse

is written in Puñjābī language which is refreshingly modern in every literary era. He has also written 675 Quatrains (*Kabitts*) in Braj on mystical experience in the light of Indian thought and musical schools. He was co-compiler of *Ādi Gurū Granth* and the most learned poet-scholar and philosopher of Gurū period. Like Bābā Buḍḍhā, he was the pillar of Sikhism for over a century. His humanity and devotion were unique and inspiring. When Gurū Hargobind was imprisoned in Gwālīor fort, he looked after the services of Harimaṇḍir. The works of Bhāi Gurdās, besides those of Bhāi Naṛd Lāl are the only works of contemporary disciple poets, which were blessed by the Gurūs. They are recited in the Golden Temple and all other Sikh Shrines along with hymns of *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib*.

*Gurmat*: The wisdom or the philosophy of the Sikh Gurūs.

*Gurmukh*: (i) saint, enlightened seer; one inspired by the Gurū-given divine wisdom, (ii) Gurū, (iii) God.

*Gurūdev*: the divine Gurū, Spiritual Father, the Apostle, the prophet.

*Gurū Granth Sāhib*: The Holy Book of the Sikhs which has a long history.

Earlier works, from which it was compiled, were known as *Poths* (or collection of hymns). When the first volume was compiled it was known as *Pothī Sāhib* or *Granth Sāhib*. Copies of the original were prepared and each Gurū stressed the importance of preparing copies which were installed in important missionary centres. Gurū Gobind Singh installed it as the Gurū, or Holy Book with Apostle Light and Authority embodied in it. It was installed in the Harimaṇḍir by Gurū Arjan just two years before his martyrdom, or perhaps earlier in 1604 A.D. Many copies of the original exist in various historical shrines. Gurū Gobind Singh started preparing copies at Damdamā Sāhib in Anaṇḍpur Sāhib, a few years after he was installed the Gurū. Many copies of this authentic codex prepared during the lifetime of Gurū Gobind Singh and his contemporaries like Bhāi Manī Singh and Bābā Dīp Singh, are found all over India. Thus the Holy Book is revered as Eternal Enlightener and no human being, however a great saint he may

be, can claim to be above the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* and *Sādh Saṅgat*, congregation of the Saints seated in the presence of *Ādi Gurū Granth*.

*Harī*: An Attribute and Name of God. In Vaiṣṇavism it is used for Kṛṣṇa, but in Sikhism it stands for Absolute God.

*Havan*: Sacrificial fire of Vedic Ceremonies.

*Hukm*: (*Hukam*) the Will of God, the divine commands of the Gurū or God.

*Hukamnāmā*: Edicts or encyclic letter of the Gurūs and Holy Mothers, written to various *Saṅgats* away from the place, where the Gurū resided. We have *Hukamnāmās* of all the Gurūs from the sixth to tenth Gurūs and Holy Mothers: Mātā Suṇḍarī and Mātā Sāhib Devī. They are of great historical importance.

*Janam Sākhī*: Hagiographical accounts of Gurū Nānak. There is no particular authentic version, because all versions suffered contamination and corruption, introduced by the enemies of the Sikhs and Sikhism.

*Japu* (*Japujī*): Morning Prayer, composition of Gurū Nānak.

*Jāpū*: Composition of Gurū Gobind Singh. One of the morning prayers.

*Kabitt Sawāīye*: Mystical Works of Bhāi Gurdās in Braj *Bhāṣā* written in Quatrains.

*Kafan*: shroud, grave cloth, winding sheet.

*Kaṅghā*: comb, one of the Five Articles of Faith (*Kakārs*) of the *Khālsā* Sikh.

*Karāh prasād*: sacramental food, sweet pudding (*halwā*) made from flour, clarified butter, sugar and water.

*Kathā*: sermon, interpreting the hymns of *Ādi Gurū Granth*.

*Kaur* (Sk. Kaṇwar): suffix used for Rājput Princesses, and also for Sikh baptized women.

*Khālsā*: In the Mughal period, *Khālsā* was the crown land on which one except the King had his ownership. When during the lifetime of Gurū Hargobind, the *Masaṇds* had started baptizing their followers; those baptized by the *Masaṇds* were called *Sahālangī* Sikhs or associate or *Sahajdhārī* Sikhs, but those baptized by the

Gurū were called Khālsā Sikhs. When Gurū Gobind Singh founded the Khālsā Holy Order, he transferred the Gurū's authority to baptize the Sikhs to ordained Khālsā Sikhs as a prelude to abolishing personal Gurūship for ever. Bhāi Gurdās II, a contemporary of Gurū Gobind Singh calls his phenomenon, "*Gur Saṅgat kīnī Khālsā*: The whole Saṅgat of the Gurū became Khālsā." The Sikh Pañth came to be known as the Khālsā Pañth.

*Khaṇḍā*: Two-Edged Sword.

*Khaṇḍe dī Pāhul*: Baptismal Water, prepared with the two-Edged Sword, introduced by Gurū Gobind Singh, when he created the Khālsā Holy Order.

*Khirqā*: A Ṣūfī dervish's patched garment, symbol of his vows of obedience to the rule of his order. The term is also used as equivalent of the term *silsilā*, or *ṭarīqa*.

*Kudrat*: (Arabic: *Qudrāt*) power, ability, potency, courage. One of the Attributes of God. Omnipotence, providence, prescience, the creation, universe, nature, destiny.

*Laṅgar*: The *laṅgar* in the Persian world was the name given to an alms house; *laṅgar-khānā* was the house for entertaining the poor, where they could find food and rest. The Ṣūfī *Khānaqāh* had a community kitchen open to all. On the pattern of these *laṅgars* attached to Ṣūfī *Khānaqāhas*, Gurū Nānak made *laṅgar*, a free and permanent institution. From the time of Gurū Nānak to the present, an open *laṅgar* is attached to all important Sikh Shrines where people of all nations; men, women and children of all religions, the saints and sinners, the friends and foes come and take their food. No one as Sikh dares to question from where they have come. It is the Gurū's *laṅgar* for all human beings.

*Mahāpraśād*: sacramental food, sanctified by prayer.

*Man*: used in Sikh Scriptures for mind, heart, consciousness.

*Maṇī*: jewel, gem, pearl.

*Manī Singh*: Bhāi Manī Singh was born during the lifetime of Gurū Hari Rāi. He belonged to a family of learned Rājput warrior scholars, known for their many sacrifices even during Jahāṅgīr's

rule. His grand-father died in the first battle of Gurū Hargobind. Out of his ten brothers, nine laid down their lives for the cause of Sikhism. Bhāi Dayāl Dās, the eldest, suffered martyrdom along with Gurū Tegh Bahādur. All his sons who were known warriors died fighting for Gurū Gobind Singh. Bhāi Manī Singh rose to the highest position of *Diwān* of Gurū Gobind Singh. In 1700 A.D. he was sent along with 25 companions to wrest control of Harimaṇdir from the break away cult of *Mīnās*. Bhāi Manī Singh then acted as High Priest of Harimaṇdir, the most outstanding leader of the Sikhs till his martyrdom in June 1734. He established a theological *Samāj* called Amritsar Taksāl, which produced disciplined missionaries known as *Giānīs*. He compiled the works of Gurū Gobind Singh in *Dasam Granth*. He is the author of *Janam-Sākhī* (*Giān-Ratnāvalī*) and *Sikhān-dī-Bhagatmālā*, based on the 11th *Vār* of Bhāi Gurdās.

*Mañtar*: Root *mañ-* 'to think' (in Greek 'menōs', Latin 'mens') is combined with the element, *tra*, which forms tool-words. Thus *mañtra* is a tool for thinking, a thing which creates a mental picture. With its sound the mañtra calls forth its contents into a state of immediate reality. The *Ādi Gurū Granth* has decried all those mañtras (incantations, spells), which are recited by the Tāntric Yogīs for the fulfilment of the worldly desires, and the same have been decried. In Sikhism the real mañtra is the Name of God.

*Masaṇds* (Arabic: *Masnad*): a throne, related to the authority of the sovereign. Missionaries trained by Gurū Amar Dās and posted as Regional Heads, were called Masaṇds. The third generation of these Masaṇds became corrupt, and the fourth and fifth generation during the times of Gurū Gobind Singh became intolerably wicked and dangerous. Gurū Gobind Singh eliminated their authority.

*Mastak*: the head, the upper part of anything.

*Muktī*: liberation, salvation, release from birth and death.

*Nām*: *Nām Jap Gurmañtra*. There are two faces of God: the Attributive Name of God called *Kritam Nām*, and Revealed Name of God called *Satnām*. The Name unveiling Truth and the Light of God.

The Sātnām is the Gurmantra of the Sikhs, which is imparted to the disciple at the time of initiation.

The Gurmantra is not an ordinary Word. It is a word carrying within its essence the spiritual energy, the living spirit and seed of the Presence and Light of God. This energy, this divine power is released to the consciousness, mind and heart of a person, who meditates on it and repeats it in contemplative solitude of dawn. It is contemplation of the word which leads to the discovery of a new dimension within our consciousness; a world of higher reality within our self. Meditative repetition of Gurmantra (Satnām) is called *nām-jāp*.

*Naṇd Lāl (Bhāi):* Bhāi Naṇd Lāl Goyā was a Persian poet, born and brought up in Ghaznī in the mystical literary tradition of Ṣūfī poets like Rūmī and Ḥāfīz. He permanently shifted to Multān, where he rose to high position and was *Mīr Munshī* of Aurāṅzeb's son Bahādur Shāh. When he met Gurū Gobīnd Singh, he was so overwhelmed by the divine inspiration of Gurū Gobīnd Singh, that he never left the Master's presence. He was further instrumental in cementing lasting friendship between Gurū Gobīnd Singh and Bahādur Shāh. He is the author of nine poetical works: *Diwān-i-Goyā*, *Zīndagīnāmāh*, *Gaṇjīnāmāh*, *Jot Bigās* (Persian and Puṇjābī), *Rehitnāmā*, *Tankhānāmā*, *Dastūr-al-Inṣā*, *Arzu'l Alfāz*, *Tosīfosanā*. After the death of Gurū Gobīnd Singh, he stayed with Mātā Suṇdarī and Mātā Sāhib Devī in Delhi. Bhāi Naṇd Lāl's works are canonized as sacred, and are sung and recited along with Gurbānī in all Sikh temples.

*Nirguṇ:* Attributeless, the Absolute God who is Unmanifest and Transcendent.

*Om̐kāṛ:* The Spiritual Ground, the Life-matrix of the creation, out of which were further created *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛiti*, or *Śivā* and *Śaktī*. It was the Primal utterance of God, out of which creation came into existence, and hence stands for Immanent Spirit of God, which is All-pervading. *Om̐* or *Om̐kāṛ* are also used as mantras.

*Pagrī:* (*Pagree*): turban.

*Pāhul*: baptismal water.

*Pañch*: five, the Elect.

*Pañchamrit*: sacramental food formed from five ingredient: *Karāh praśād*.

*Pañj Piārās*: The Five Beloved Elected for *Khālsā* baptism by Gurū Gobiñd Singh, and subsequently became the embodiment of the Gurū to initiate new disciples.

*Pañth*: Originally the word meant path, the same as *Mārag*, or *Rāh*. All three words are used in *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib*. The word then began to be used for religious orders such as Nāth Pañth, Kabīr Pañth. For Sikhism the words used were, Nirmal Pañth, Sikh Pañth, Gurmukh Pañth during the life time of Gurū Nānak. The word *Khālsā* Pañth was used for the *Khālsā* Holy Order and the whole Sikh nation which accepted the spiritual and poetical leadership of the four Takhsats. The word Nānak-Pañthī was used by the Mughals and political news-writers for all the Sikh Gurūs, and even for Bañdā, and it was never used for Gurū Nānak and his followers alone.

*Patit*: apostate from Sikh religion; morally corrupt person. The doors of Sikhism are always open to apostate for re-entry, if he repents and accepts baptism and the Sikh Code of Conduct.

*Paramhañsa*: a saint of the highest order; a religious man who has subdued all his senses by abstract meditations.

*Pāras*: (Sk, *sparaś maṇī*), philosopher's stone.

*Prashād*: (i) gracious kindness, favour, aid, meditation, kindness personified, grace. (2) propitiatory offering, food presented to Deity.

*Rehit*: Moral code of conduct, imparted by Gurū to the Sikhs at the time of initiation. There are innumerable verses in *Ādi Gurū Granth Sāhib* on the moral code of conduct and the character of a Sikh. When the *Khālsā* Holy Order was ordained by Gurū Gobiñd Singh, he imparted orally the basic moral code of conduct. The same is imparted orally to this day at all the ceremonies of baptism.

*Rehitnāmās*: When under the adverse circumstances and under the influence of Hindu and Islāmic society, the Sikhs were not clear

whether they should adopt or accept certain religious practices prevalent in society, the contemporary apostles like Bhāi Dayā Singh wrote *Rehitnāmās*, putting on record what a Sikh should do and what he should not do? Earlier *Rehitnāmās* are authenticated, but many fake *Rehitnāmās* were written in the name of Bhāi Dayā Singh and Bhāi Naṛd Lāl, and some *Rehitnāmās* like that of Chaupā Singh were changed into family historical documents. The Sikhs read them with historical and ethical interest, but never accept them blindly. Many societies print and publish old *Rehitnāmās* under new names, giving the impression that *Rehitnāmās* differ from time to time. In the 19th century, some Sikh Saint cults tried to popularize their external forms and dietary rules as *Rehit*, but they are neither approved nor accepted by the Sikhs collectively.

**Rāga:** lit. colouring, feeling, passion, loveliness and beauty of a song, a musical note, harmony, melody, musical mode or order of sacred or musical formula sound. Bharat enumerates six *Rāgas*: *Bhairava*, *Kauśikā*, *Hindola*, *Dīpakā*, *Srī Rāga* and *Megha*, each exciting some affection. Each of the *Rāgas* is wedded to five or six consorts, called *Rāganīs*. Their union gives rise to many other musical modes. *Ādi Gurū Granth* is compiled in chapters of 31 *Rāgas*; music and poetry are dominant feature of *Ādi Gurū Granth*.

**Sachā Pātsāh:** True King, used by the Sikhs for the Sikh Gurūs, who enjoyed spiritual and political sovereignty within the sphere of their influence.

**Sādh Saṅgat:** Bhāi Naṛd Lāl in one of his verses in *Zindagi Nāmah* clearly states that a congregation of virtuous and saintly persons alone is called Sikh Saṅgat or *Sādh Saṅgat*. A congregation of wicked and mischievous persons, even when held at a holy place, is neither Sikh Saṅgat, nor *Sādh Saṅgat*.

**Sahaj:** The highest mystical state, which is also known as transcendent state, after achieving which a Sikh leads a normal human life, but yet lives in a state of ecstasy and vision of His Presence. The spiritual stage of Sahaj can only be attained through a path known



as *Sahaj Mārag*; a natural path in which unsocial and abnormal ascetic activities are not necessary. A path of love, service, devotion coupled with patience, sincerity, humanity leads to the mystical state of Sahaj, in which there is a perfect balance between the natural and supernatural, and no religious activity is either unsocial or anti-social like the Haṭh Yoga practices.

*Sahajdhārī*: Novices or unbaptized devotees of Gurū Nānak are called *Nāmdhārīk* Sikhs. During the time of Gurū Hargobind they were called *Sahalaṅgī* Sikhs (Associated Disciples), but during the time of Gurū Gobind Singh, they came to be known as *Sahajdhārī* Sikhs. Many Sahajdhārī Sikhs who were exclusively devoted to meditation and prayer have been respected as great saints. Even today Sindhī Sahajdhārī Sikhs are far more respected for their devotion and services of Sikhism than bearded and turbaned communists, atheists, and corrupt and characterless Akālīs and Congressites.

*Saṁsāra* (Sk. *Samśāra*): going or wandering through, undergoing transmigration; course passage through a succession of states; circuit of mundane existence; the world, secular life.

*Saṅgat*: come together, met, encountered, joined, united, fitted together, apposite, proper, suitable, congregation, companionship.

*Sant*: an illumined and enlightened holyman who has saintly virtues and character.

*Sarb Loh*: All-Steel. In Gurū Gobind Singh's writings it is Attributive Name of God.

*Sargun*: Deity with human attributes, *avatārs* looked upon as gods or god.

*Śabad*: (Word) is used for the Name of God as the word for the hymns of the *Ādi Gurū Granth*, and for celestial music (*Anhad Śabad*), which one hears in higher states.

*Shamshār*: sword, scimitar, sabre.

*Sloka*: couplet, said to have been first composed by Vālmīk; hymn of praise, stanza, a kind of epic metre. It sometimes consists of 4 padas, or quarter verses of 8 syllables each, or 2 lines of syllable each; each like allowing great liberty in 5th, 13th, 14th, and 15th

syllables.

*Siddhī*: accomplishment, performance, attainment, success, supreme felicity, emancipation, perfection, acquisition of supernatural powers.

*Simrin*: lit. Recitation, remembrance. As in Śūfism, so in Sikhism, remembrance of His Presence by reciting or meditating on His Name is the most important spiritual exercise. Ritual repetition or mutterings of His Name is not *Simrin*. The Upaniṣadic repetition of *Om* was in theory *Simrin*, but it aimed at Brāhminical concept of the Absolute; an abstraction. The Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva repetition of Name aimed at reaching the divinity of deities like Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, Śiva, which are creatures and created beings. The Sikh *Simrin* aims at the divine Presence of God as love, beauty and truth, and leads to a true vision of the light of God. *Simrin* of the Gurū's Word resounds with inaudible Unstruck Music: *Anhad Śabad*, and revelation of His Light in the tenth seat of our consciousness: *Dasam Duār*.

*Siṅgh*: Lion; tiger; Surname of *Khālsā* Sikhs.

*Surti*: mind, consciousness.

*Sawaiye*: quatrains with fixed number of syllables in each line.

*Takhat*: Throne. The four *Takhats* of the Sikhs at Amritsar, Anandpur, Paṭnā Sāhib and Nander.

*Tegh*: a sword, scimitar, glaive, falchion, a lance, point of a spear.

*Thug*: In some parts of India the *Thugs* are styled as stranglers. The Tamils call them Moslem Nooslers. The *Thugs* were members of religious fraternity of professional assassins, once active in central northern provinces of India and in Deccan. Though the date of their origin is unknown, they were active in the seventeenth century, according to Hsūan Tsang, the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim.

*Turiyā*: the fourth state of Spirit, pure impersonal spirit of God, transcendent state of mind and spirit. In *Turiyā* there is permanent union with the Supreme Spirit. It is the highest goal of spiritual ascent.

*Vāhi Gurū*: the *Gurūmantra* in Sikh religion, the literal meaning of

which is, "Wondrous art Thou O Enlightener of Soul." At the time of Sikh baptism a disciple is initiated into the mystic perception of this Gurūmantra.

*Vāk*: *Śabad* (Latin Vox) comes from root vach; to speak the Word (*Śabad*), cosmic ideation, divine word, also called *kavāo* in *Japujī*, which means God's utterance on emanation. "*Kūtā pasāo eko kavāo*: from one utterance of God the creation manifested itself." In Hebrew, the word for Light is "*Aur*"; God said, let there be Light (*Aur*) and there was Light.

*Vivek* (*Bibek*): discrimination, distinction, true knowledge, right judgement, the power of separating the invisible Spirit from the visible world.

*Zafarnāmah*: Letter written by Gurū Gobind Singh to Aurangzeb, in which he accuses the Mughal Emperor of breaking his oath on *Kor'ān* and treacherously attacking him, and is a part of Gurū Gobind Singh's collected works, *Dasam Granth*.

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- ṭhande khūhū naikai pag visārī āiā sirī nangai. *Vār.* 32:19. 32, 44n
- ānī mahā parsādū vaṇḍī khwāiā. *Vār.* 20:10. 58, 70n
- ek miśṭān pān lāvat mahā parsādī. *Kabitt.* 309. 58, 70n
- khānd ghrīt chūn jal pāvak ikatar bhae  
pañch mil pargaṭ pañchāmrit pargās hai. *Kabitt.* 124. 58, 70n
- murdā hoi murīd na gali hovṇā. *Vār.* 3:18. 73, 364-65
- vāloh niki ākhīai khaṇḍe dhāroh suṇiai tikhī. *Vār.* 28:1. 73, 83n, 364, 373n
- suṇī pukārī dātār prabhū  
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- satigur purkh diāl hoi, Vāhigurū sach maṇtra suṇāiā. *Vār.* 11:3. 83, 92n
- gurmukh bhalke uṭh karī amrit vele sarū nāhavaṇḍā. *Vār.* 40:11. 87, 92n
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- gur kai bachan uchārkai dharmśālā dī surtī karṇḍā. *Vār.* 40:11. 88, 92n
- chārī varanū gur sikh karī sādḥ sangatī sach khaṇḍū vasāiā. *Vār.* 18:14. 88, 92n
- hau tisū viṭohū vāriā hondai tāṇī su hoi nitāṇā. *Vār.* 12:3. 88, 92n
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- Gursikh sādḥ asāṅkh jagī dharamśāl ṭhāi ṭhāi suhāiā. *Vār.* 23:2. 253, 291n
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- ekaṁkārū ikāṅg likhī uṛā Oamkār lakhāiā. *Vār.* 39:1. 87, 92n, 336-37
- Vāhi Gurū Gurmaṇtra hai jāpī haumai khoi. *Vār.* 13:2. 337
- jithai bābā pair dharī pūjā āsaṇū ṭhāpanī soā. *Vār.* 1:27. 371, 373n
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- ki manam dar tū ghair tū kas nīsat.      *Ganīnāmāh*, 25-38.      75-76
- hamū Nānak asto hamū Aṅgad ast.      *Jot Bigās*, 23-30.      110-11
- Khālsā soi jo nidā tiāgai.      *Tankhānāmā*, 44-55. 172-73, 185n
- suṇō Nānd Lāl eho sāch pargaṭ krāūn āṇṇo rāj. *Tankhānāmā*, 56-62. 173, 185n
- ān hajūme khus kiū dafē balā-sat.      *Zindagī Nāmā*, 19-25.      288-89
- hazār takḥatī muraṣā fitādāh dar rāhī and      *Diwān-i-Goyā*, 27.      346-47



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